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POPULAR HINDUISM.



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PAPERS ON INDIAN REFORM.

RELIGIOUS REFORM.

PART I.

POPULAR HINDUISM.

**Yatha devah, tatha bhaktah,
"As is the god, so is the worshipper."**

"Thou thoughtest that I (God) was altogether such an one as thyself,"
The Bible.

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**THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA :  
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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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At present the hopes of most Indian Reformers rest chiefly on "National Congresses" and political changes. By their means a supposed Golden Age is to be brought back. This is a very old delusion. "In all times," says Smiles, "men have been prone to believe that their happiness and well-being were to be secured by means of institutions, rather than by their own conduct." A comparison between the United States and the South American Republics shows that the value of representative Government depends upon the character of the people.

It is fully admitted that political institutions should vary with the intelligence of the governed. The mistake is to expect more from them than they can give.

No truth, perhaps, requires to be more impressed upon the minds of Indian reformers than the words of Sir Madhava Row :

"The longer one lives, observes, and thinks, the more deeply does he feel there is no community on the face of the earth which suffers less from political evils and more from self-inflicted, or self-accepted, or self-created, and, therefore, avoidable evils than the Hindu community!"

At the root of these evils lies Hinduism. The proverb expresses the truth, *Yatha devah, tatha bhaktah*, As is the god, so is the worshipper. We are assimilated to the objects we worship. The Bhagavad Gita says: "By contemplating material objects we become materialised." The vast majority of the Hindus worship senseless blocks and deities stained with crime. The great reform that India needs is to turn from dumb idols to the one living and holy God. All other changes required would follow in its train.

Among intelligent Hindus there is a general acknowledgment that religious reform is needed; but, except among members of the Brahma Samaj, scarcely any come forward to indicate the changes that are necessary. The following pages are an attempt to review Popular Hinduism, to show what is defective, and to point out the reforms which ought to be made. Philosophic and Vedic Hinduism are considered in other Papers.

A false patriotism, very wide-spread at present, leads some to use sophistical arguments to defend what they know to be wrong; but the minds of others are more open to the truth, and their chief object is the real good of their country. It is the latter who are now addressed.

The compiler would specially acknowledge his obligations to *Religious Thought and Life in India*, by Sir Monier Williams. Longer extracts have generally quotation marks, but many passages have simply been summarised. The work now mentioned is somewhat expensive (14*s.*), but his *Hinduism*, published by the S. P. C. K., is cheap (2*s.* 6*d.*), and contains an excellent condensed sketch of the subject. *Hinduism, Past and Present*, by the Rev. Dr. Murray Mitchell, (R. T. S. 4*s.*), is also strongly recommended.

MADRAS, October, 1887.

J. MURDOCH.

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# POPULAR HINDUISM.

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## INTRODUCTION.

**Religiousness of the Hindus.**—The Hindus are, in their way, one of the most religious people in the world. It has been said of them that “they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously, and sin religiously.” It is so far right that religion engages much attention. Our stay in this world is comparatively short, even in the case of the longest lived. To the man of fourscore, when he looks back, it seems as if it were only a few days since he was a child. Consider, on the other hand, the eternity to which we are speeding, and which we may enter at any moment. The man would justly be considered a fool who spent all his fortune in a single day, and had to starve the remainder of his life. That man is an incomparably greater fool who attends only to his body, which must so soon die, and neglects his soul which will live for ever either in happiness or misery.

**Duty of Religious Inquiry.**—There are two kinds of money, good and bad. Suppose a man is paid for his labour in bad rupees, however many he may have collected, he is, in reality, worth nothing. Just as there are coiners who make bad money and pass it off as good, so cunning wicked men, for their own gain, have devised false religions to impose upon the ignorant.

There are very many religions in the world. A North India proverb says, *jiine muni, itne mat*. There are as many religions as there are Munis. In general, religions are opposed to one another. One religion says that there is only one God, another says that there are 33 crores of divinities. Some say that the soul of man is part of God ; others say that it is quite distinct ; one religion forbids the worship of idols ; others enjoin it ; one religion says that sin may be washed away by bathing at certain places ; another says that all this is vain. Religions so contradictory cannot all be true. Most of them must be false, and those who follow them are like men paid for their labour in bad money.

Many people, without inquiry, blindly follow the religion of their forefathers. They act more wisely in worldly matters. When a clerk receives his salary, he counts the rupees, and sees that they

are all good. Even a woman when she goes to the bazaar to buy an earthen pot, taps it to find if it is sound before she gives the money. In religion, people generally act like a flock of sheep, which if the first leap over a bridge, the rest follow and are drowned.

Bad money may be known from good by means of the touchstone. God has given us a touchstone to distinguish between true and false religions—our reason. If we do not use it, we will suffer like those men who take bad rupees without examination. This little book is intended to assist those who wish to investigate how far the religion of their forefathers is true and to be accepted.

**Religions of the Hindus.**—India is peopled by more than a hundred different nations. Hinduism is a mixture of all the creeds of such as are willing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Brahmins and adopt caste rules. Mr. Chentsal Rao, of Madras, thus points out the erroneousness of the idea that the Hindus have only one religion:—

"There are quite as great differences between the forms of belief grouped under the term 'Hindu Religion' as there are between any of the principal religions of the world. Some of the doctrines of the Hindu religion are theistic, some atheistic, and some pantheistic. In short, Hinduism is an encyclopædia of religions."\*

It admits every form of religious faith and practice—from a pure speculative atheism to the debased forms of demon and fetich worship which prevail among the lower classes.

Sir A. C. Lyall compares Hinduism to "a mere troubled sea without shore or visible horizon, driven to and fro by the winds of boundless credulity and grotesque invention."

The following main divisions will be considered in successive Papers:

I. POPULAR HINDUISM.—This may, in general terms, be defined as the religion of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, the Puranas, and the Tantras. Of nearly 200 millions of Hindus, about ninety-nine out of every hundred accept Hinduism in this form. It is almost universal among the women, and that which they teach their children. Under it, aboriginal superstitions will be noticed.

II. PHILOSOPHIC HINDUISM.—This may be described, as the Hinduism of the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, &c. In its pure form it is held by comparatively few; but some of its doctrines are included in Popular Hinduism, and many persons combine the two.

III. VEDIC HINDUISM.—The adherents of the Arya Samaj in North India and the Punjab profess to base their creed on the Vedas, with what correctness will be seen in the course of investigation.

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\* Christian College Magazine, June, 1886.

**IV. NEW HINDUISM.**—This includes various attempts to purify Hinduism. Either under this head or separately, will be noticed systems like the Brahma Samaj.

**Religious Reform needed in India.**—It must be confessed that the great mass of the Hindus do not admit this. They are perfectly satisfied with their religion, and think it the best in the world. The Vedas are eternal and given from the mouth of Brahma; any change would be for the worse. There are even educated men who regard Hinduism as a “monument of ancient wisdom,” a “marvellously consistent and perfect system,” “inferior in respect to the purity and practical character of its sacred truths to no other religions in the world.”

On the other hand, the most intelligent Hindus admit that the “man-made” portions of their religion ought to be separated from its “God-made” portions. Some years ago Sir Madhava Row recommended a “judicious revival or repair of Hinduism” to “suit the present times.”

*The Hindu*, the leading Native paper in South India, has the following remarks in an article on “Social and Religious Reform” :—

“As in Christian countries, so in our country also our moral and religious ideas are derived from our theology. But this theology as well as these ideas must be explained away, modified, and reformed in certain aspects at least, to suit the changes that in course of time take place in the intelligence of the people. It is no longer possible to justify to the young educated Hindu apparently immoral and crude practices because they are sanctioned in certain Puranas. The Hindu mythology has to be purged of the absurdities that have overgrown it during centuries of ignorance and of superstitions and timid isolation. In the same manner, the moral ideas of our common people have to be improved. An orthodox Hindu would tolerate falsehood, cowardice and self-abasement, but would dare to perdition his neighbour who swerves the least from accepted conventions even in the details of personal habits. Such moral perversity does not indicate a healthy social condition. Similarly our ideas of charity, of social distinction, education, and social well-being in general have to be drawn out of the influence of an obsolete and backward civilization, and brought in harmony with the fresh spirit of the time.” June 24th, 1887.

The foregoing proposals must commend themselves to every intelligent Hindu.

**The Reforms Needed.**—While it is admitted, in general terms, that reform is required, it is to be expected that there will be great difference of opinion as to the changes necessary. The only way of arriving at a correct conclusion is to examine each feature of Hinduism in detail, and consider carefully any evils connected with it.

The writer cheerfully admits that Hinduism contains some great truths, more or less clearly expressed. Moral precepts of a high order may also be culled from some of its sacred books. Sir Monier Williams has published an interesting collection, entitled, "*Indian Wisdom.*" The late Dr. John Muir's *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, is another work of the same kind. Some of the passages are perfect gems. But the confession has also to be made that the Hindu sacred books likewise contain much that is erroneous and calculated to have a most prejudicial effect in every way, intellectually, socially, morally, and religiously. The aim should be to retain what is true, reject what is false, and accept what is good from any source.

If an architect is employed to examine a large, old building, he goes over it carefully, pointing out what is necessary to be done in each part. He mentions *defects*: his survey would be useless if he omitted them. In like manner, if Hinduism is to be reformed, it is necessary to specify the corruptions from which it has to be purified.

Popular Hinduism, in its main features will be passed under review, and apparent evils will be noticed. The whole will conclude with a summary of the changes recommended.

The Maharaja of Benares has a noble family motto : "There is no Religion higher than Truth." The patriotism which seeks to defend every thing national, whether right or wrong, is as injurious as it is false. Simply to arrive at the truth should be the aim in the investigation.

The inquiry also should be thorough. An old insecure building may be whitewashed so as to look apparently strong; but it will bury in its ruins those who seek shelter in it during a storm.

## POPULAR HINDUISM.

This is a very wide subject which may be treated in different ways. The order of time and development will partly be followed.

### DEMON WORSHIP.

Demonolatry is the religion of savages in all parts of the world. Without doubt, it was the original superstition over a great part of Asia. To the present day it survives, more or less, from Siberia to South Ceylon. Buddhism has been powerless to overcome it. The Sinhalese are far more under its influence than the creed of Gautama. The Burmese, from the highest to the lowest, both publicly and privately, engage in demon worship. The following remarks refer especially to India.

India was first peopled by wild tribes, somewhat like those still found in some of the jungles. They were dark in colour compared with the Aryan invaders; they spoke strange languages, and had

other customs. These things, together with their sudden night attacks, with loud yells, upon those who sought to take their lands, made the Aryans convert them into devils.

In course of time the Aryans and aborigines blended together as friends; but the dread of demon-foes remained. "The great majority of the inhabitants of India," says Sir Monier Williams, "are, from the cradle to the burning ground, victims of a form of mental disease which is best expressed by the term demonophobia. They are haunted and oppressed by a perpetual dread of demons. They are firmly convinced that evil spirits of all kinds, from malignant fiends to merely mischievous imps and elves, are ever on the watch to harm, harass, and torment them, to cause plague, sickness, famine and disaster, to impede, injure, and mar every good work."

"So deep-seated and ineradicable is the fear of evil spirits in the minds of the lower orders, that in many villages of India the doors of the houses are never allowed to face the South, lest the entrance of some dreaded demon should be facilitated."\*

The majority of the demons are supposed to have originally been human beings, especially those who met with a sudden or violent death, and had been dreaded in their lifetime. A British officer, mortally wounded in Travancore, was afterwards worshipped as a demon. Even a missionary's wife, who died of cholera during a journey and was buried in a lonely waste, began to be worshipped; so that her remains had to be taken to Madura.

When a woman dies unpurified within fifteen days after child-birth, she becomes a demon, and is always on the watch to attack other young mothers. Sir Monier Williams found in one place people worshipping the ghost of a milkman who was killed by a tiger and became a devil. In another place the ghost of a potter became a devil, and a terror to the neighbourhood. The priests of these demons were milkmen and potters respectively. A robber who was hung at Trichinopoly became so popular as a demon that children were constantly named after him.

All are powerful, malicious, and interfering; and all are desirous of bloody sacrifices and frantic dances. One demon prefers the sacrifice of a goat, another a hog, a third a cock. Pariah demons require arrack in addition. Brandy and cheroots, which the British officer loved during life, were his favourite offerings; but they were afterwards consumed by those who presented them.

Most of the demons are supposed to dwell in trees. The idea seems to be that they require protection from the weather like human beings, and betake themselves to trees as convenient and agreeable places of shelter. Some wander to and fro, and go up and down in uninhabited wastes; some skulk in shady retreats.

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\* *Religious Thought and Life in India*, pp. 210, 245.

Sometimes they take up their abodes in houses ; one of them may take a fancy to inhabit the body of a votary.

Sometimes the demons are content with frightening the timid, without doing any real harm. People hear a strange noise at night ; and immediately they see a devil making his escape in the shape of a dog as large as a hyena or a cat with eyes like two lamps. Even in the daytime, about the close of the hot season, they may often be seen in the shape of a whirlwind, catching up and whisking about in their fierce play every dry stick and leaf that happens to lie in their path.



A representation used by devil dancers in Ceylon, to frighten ignorant people into the performance of ceremonies.

Nightmare is always supposed to be caused by a demon. He seats himself on the chest of the sleeping person, and tries to suffocate him.

In South India there are two essential features of demon worship, namely, dancing and the offering of bloody sacrifices.

The devil-dancer wears dresses adapted to frighten the ignorant spectators. The instruments of noise are the tom-tom, the horn, but especially the bow. The last consists of bells of different sizes fastened to a gigantic bow, played on by several persons. As each musician strives to outstrip his neighbour both in rapidity and loudness, there is such a tumult of frightful sounds as may be supposed to delight even a demon's ear.

The music is at first slow, and the dancer either stands still or moves about in silence. As it becomes quicker, his excitement begins to rise. Sometimes he lashes himself with a huge whip or drinks the blood of the sacrifice, putting the throat of the decapitated goat to his mouth. At last he snorts and whirls about with frantic leaps. The demon has entered him, and those present consult him about the disease, and the offerings to be made.

The object of the sacrifice is the removal of the demon's anger, or of the calamities which his anger brings down. The demon thirsts for the life of his votary, or for that of his child; and by a little ceremony and show of respect, a little music, he may be content with the life of a goat instead.\*

**Evils of Demon Worship.**—There are no such beings as those that are supposed to cause the evils before described. They are just as imaginary as those that ignorant parents employ to frighten children. The Hindus are troubled by false alarms.

Demon dances and ceremonies are generally performed when pestilence is feared, and last the whole night, the time when the body is weakest, and the causes of disease strongest. Exposure to the night air and fatigue tend to spread the epidemic.

Demon ceremonies take away the attention of the people from what would really be beneficial. No amount of dancing or offerings will stop a single case of small-pox, while vaccination is an effectual protection. The latter should be attended to instead of the former. Cleanliness, pure water, and wholesome food, are the true safeguards against cholera.

It is most degrading for human beings to worship demons. One effect is to make them like demons in disposition, quarrelsome and revengeful. God alone ought to be worshipped, and to give the honour due to him to demons is like people in a country, instead of honouring their rightful king, paying respect to low caste thieves.

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\* Chiefly abridged from Bishop Caldwell.

Devil-dancing is declining in South India. Numbers who once stood in constant dread of imaginary evil spirits are now freed from their superstitious fears, and worship the one true God alone. It should be universally abandoned.

#### TUTELARY AND VILLAGE DEITIES.

A tutelary god among the Hindus is one that delivers from the calamities believed to be due to demons. The village deities (*grama-devata*) probably represent the local fetiches\* once held in veneration by uncivilized aboriginal tribes, and afterwards grafted into the Hindu system of the Brahmins, whose policy has ever been to appropriate all existing cults, customs, and superstitions.

Scarcely a village and indeed scarcely a household in India is without its tutelary divinity, usually represented by some rudely carved image or symbol, located in homely shrines, or over doorways, or, it may be, denoted by simple patches of red paint on rocks or under sacred trees or in crossways, and always taking the place of the superior gods in the religion of the lower orders.

The village deity is often represented simply by a stone. The worship of stones is very ancient and was widely prevalent. The prophet Isaiah, 2600 years ago, refers to the offerings to stones among the Jews. The Arabs worshipped rocks and stones before the time of Muhammad, and the black stone of the Kaaba is still venerated by them.

An American Indian will pick up a round stone of any kind, paint it, clear away the grass at some distance from his hut, and there place his stone or god. He makes an offering to it of some tobacco, and prays to it to deliver him from danger. In some parts of America three kinds of stones are specially worshipped—one profitable for crops, another for women to be delivered without pain, and a third for rain.

All over India there are stones which are worshipped, and smeared with red lead as an offering. A cooly vows to the village deity, "If thou help me in this work, I will offer to thee on the coming Saturday a pice' worth of red lead."

*Shashti*, protectress of children, receives worship, vows, and offerings, especially from women. Her only representative is a rough stone, as big as a man's head, set at the foot of a sacred tree.

In South India, *Ayenar*, said to be the son of Siva and Vishnu, is supposed to guard the fields, crops, and herds of the peasantry, and drive away the demons causing disease, blight and other calamities. Outside many villages, generally among a group of trees, may be seen shrines of *Ayenar*, surrounded with rude clay figures of horses

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\* A fetich or fetish is any object, living or inanimate, looked upon as the representative or dwelling place of a god.

—often of life size—on which he is supposed to ride when keeping guard. He has two wives who generally sit on each side of him, and take an active part in driving away demons. No villager in Southern India will pass near the shrines of Ayenar and his wives after dark. If any person happens to cross their path when they are careering about the fields, he is liable to be taken for an evil spirit and slain.

One would suppose that a grain of common sense would prevent people from thinking that an ugly horse of clay, unable itself to move a foot, would be of any use to a god for riding.

After recovery from sickness or to commemorate any piece of good fortune, the villagers place fresh clay horses round the shrine of Ayenar, as thankofferings or in fulfilment of vows. He is also at such times propitiated by offerings of the blood of swine, goats, sheep, cocks and other animals, or by cooked food and libations of strong liquor.

*Hanuman* (from a word meaning ‘possessing large jaws’) is a very common village god in the Dekkan, Central and Upper India. He will be noticed again under animal worship.

The most popular tutelary deities of India are the “Mothers,” called *Matas* in the north, and *Ammans* in the south. Generally there is also a male deity who protects, like the female, from all adverse and demoniacal influences. But the Mother is the favourite object of adoration. She may be supposed to possess more activity and force (*sakti*), while as feminine she is more easily propitiated by prayer, flattery, and offerings, more ready to defend from evil, more irritable, uncertain and wayward in her temper and words, more dangerously spiteful, and prone to inflict diseases, if offended by neglect.

In Gujarat alone there are about 140 distinct Mothers, besides numerous varieties of some of the more popular forms. The name of one of the Mothers is Khodiyar, ‘Mischief.’ An outbreak of sickness is supposed to be caused by neglect in supplying her with daily food. One Mother prevents cholera, another causes cholera, one causes and prevents whooping cough, another controls mad dogs.

The small-pox goddess is a form of divine Mother worshipped under different names in every part of India. In the north she is called Sitala Devi or simply Devi. Sitala means “She who cools.” Her name in the south is Mari-amman, Mother of Death. Small-pox is called by the common people “the sport of the *Amman*.” When a person is stricken by small-pox the expression the people use is “the *Amman* is taking her pastime over him.”

The Chinese have a small-pox god. When the late Emperor was attacked by the disease, the image of the god was carried in

procession, with great ceremony, through the streets of Peking, and was even brought into the sickroom. After the Emperor's death, the god was abused, and his image broken up.

Many of the local Mothers have been represented by the Brahmins to be forms of Kali. In the south, Kali-amman, as well as Mari-amman, is supposed to preside over cholera. In the north, a new goddess, called Ola Bibi, has the same office, and is worshipped in the month Phalgun.

These female tutelary deities, if not propitiated by constant offerings, and especially with blood, inflict the very plagues from which they are thought usually to protect people. Some of the "Mothers," dreaded for their fierce nature, as Kali-amman and Mari-amman, are themselves simply demons.

Bishop Caldwell says, "The only difference that I can perceive between the *Ammans* and the devils, consists in this, that the *Ammans* are never supposed to take up their abode in the bodies and minds of their worshippers. What is called demoniacal possession is confined to devils properly so called."

**Deaths from Small-pox and Cholera.**—About 240,000 human beings are, as it were, sacrificed every year in India on the altar of the imaginary goddess of small-pox, who is supposed for her amusement to scatter the seeds of the disease. Ignorant people are afraid to get their children vaccinated, lest they should incur the anger of the goddess. There is no such goddess; the belief about her is a false superstition, leading to great loss of life. If persons are properly vaccinated in infancy and again at puberty, almost perfect protection is secured.

The matter for vaccination was first taken from the cow, and this is still one of the best ways of being vaccinated.

About as many die every year from cholera as from small-pox. It is not caused by any goddess or demon. It is a kind of poison seed which springs up best among filth. There is no complete preservative against it like vaccination; but cleanliness, good food, pure water, warm clothing, are great safeguards.

The ignorant trust only to offerings and ceremonies for protection against pestilence. Educated men should try to spread sound knowledge on the subject; they should encourage vaccination, a pure water supply, and cleanliness among all with whom they come in contact.

**FILTH is the true Mari-amman, Mother of Death.**

#### DEIFIED MEN.

Five classes have especially been deified—kings, warriors, Brahmins, saints, and sages.

"In India," says Sir A. C. Lyall, "whatever be the original reason for venerating a deceased man, his upward course towards deification is the

same. At first we have the grave of one whose name, birthplace and parentage are well known in the district; if he died at home, his family often set up a shrine, instal themselves in possession, and realise a handsome income out of the offerings; they became hereditary keepers of the sanctuary, if the shrine prospers and its virtues stand test. Or if the man wandered abroad, settled near some village or sacred spot, became renowned for his austerity or his afflictions, and there died, the neighbours think it great luck to have the tomb of a holy man within their borders, and the landholders administer the shrine by manorial right. In the course of a very few years, as the recollection of the man's personality becomes misty, his origin grows mysterious, his career takes a legendary hue, his birth and death were both supernatural; in the next generation the names of the elder gods get introduced into the story, and so the marvellous tradition works itself into a myth, until nothing but a personal incarnation can account for such a series of prodigies. The man was an *Avatar* of Vishnu or Siva; his supreme apotheosis is now complete, and the Brahmans feel warranted in providing for him a niche in the orthodox Pantheon.

"The earliest start of even a first rate god may have been exceedingly obscure; but if he or his shrine make a few good cures at the outset (especially among women and valuable cattle), his reputation goes rolling up like a snowball. This is the kind of success which has made the fortune of some of the most popular, the richest, and the most widely known gods in Berar, who do all the leading business."\*

Jealousies and rivalries occasionally spring up between the adherents and admirers of various departed saints or heroes, especially if much expense has been incurred in erecting shrines, and monuments in the hope of attracting pilgrims to particular localities.

At Pandharpur, in the Deccan, the favourite god is Vithoba, originally a Brahman, but now regarded as a form of Krishna. The Marathi poet Tukarama has become himself an object of adoration. At Jejuri, 30 miles from Poona, Khandoba, a raja, is looked upon as an incarnation of Siva. A man, called Balaji, considered an incarnation of Vishnu, has a temple at Tirupati, north-west of Madras, whose income is said to amount to 1½ lakhs a year. Rama and Krishna, notwithstanding their human parentage, have been exalted by their worshippers to the first rank among Vishnu's incarnations.

The hero worship of India is subject to constant changes. Worshippers are capricious; great warriors, great saints, and great sages have their day, and find themselves pushed into the background, while their places are taken by rival warriors, saints, and sages who claim to be still greater. "The Indian Pantheon," says Sir A. C. Lyall, "like the palace in the Persian parable, is but a caravanserai."

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\* *Asiatic Studies*, pp. 22, 24.

## ANCESTRAL WORSHIP.

The Hindus suppose that some of the dead are degraded to the state of evil demons, while others are elevated to the position of divinities. The general idea is that the dead require to be nourished for three generations by their descendants, and to have works of merit performed for their benefit.

Ancestral worship forms a part of nearly every religion. It is the chief superstition of China. Every house in the country has an altar before which morning and evening adoration is paid to departed ancestors. When a marriage is proposed, the papers are laid on the ancestral altar. The Chinese believe that the happiness of the spirits depends in a great measure on the worship and offerings of posterity, and that those who are careful to render it to them secure the favour of the gods. Once a year they worship at the tombs of their ancestors. A feast is provided, and large quantities of paper-money are burned.

It is much the same in India. To the mind of the Hindu, says Professor Bhattacharjya, "Ancestor-worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu religion."\*

The first object of the Hindu Shraddha is to provide the departed spirit with an intermediate body. Were it not for this, believed to be created by the offerings, the spirit would be an impure and unquiet ghost (*preta*), wandering about on the earth or in the air among demons, and condemned itself to become an evil spirit. The intermediate body converts it from a *Preta* into a *Pitri* or ancestor. The ball (*Pinda*) of rice offered on the first day nourishes the spirit in such a way as to furnish it with a head; on the second day, the *Pinda* gives it a neck and shoulders, and so on. By the tenth day the intermediate body is sufficiently formed to feel the sensation of hunger. On the eleventh and twelfth days it feeds voraciously on the offerings, and so gains strength on the thirteenth day for its terrible journey to Yama.

The wicked man, according to the Garuda Purana, has to travel 86,000 *yojanas*. Midway is the awful river Vaitarani, 100 *yojanas* in breadth, of unfathomable depth, filled with blood, infested by huge sharks, crocodiles and sea monsters; darkened by clouds of hideous vultures. Thousands of condemned spirits stand trembling on its banks. Consumed by a raging thirst, they drink the blood which flows at their feet, then tumbling headlong into the torrent they are overwhelmed by the rushing waves. Finally they are hurried down to the lowest depths of hell to undergo inconceivable tortures.

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\* Tagore Law Lectures, p. 180.

On the other hand the Hindu is taught that by performing certain religious rites and giving gifts to the Brahmans, all the terrific penalties of sin may be avoided, and Yama loses his victims. The Brahmans are held for the time to represent the Pitrîs, and whatever nourishes and benefits the Brahmans nourishes and benefits the Pitrîs. It is also thought that the offerers store up merit for themselves as well as help their ancestors. A childless man who has no son to make offerings for him is said to fall into the hell called *Put*. *Putra*, a son, is supposed to mean one who saves from hell.

A Shraddha may be performed every day and especially on various occasions of rejoicing, as on naming a child, on entering a new dwelling, &c.

**Poverty caused by Shraddhas.**—Native newspapers complain of the poverty of the people, and lay the blame at the door of the British Government, whereas it is largely caused by their own insane customs.

The funeral ceremonies of the older members of a family involve a great expenditure. In the Panjab the average cost is said to be Rs. 500. “A well-to-do person in Bengal,” says Sir Monier Williams, “would incur the everlasting obloquy of his family and friends and be almost excommunicated from society if he spent less than six thousand or seven thousand rupees on the funeral of a father, and in the carrying out of all the other necessary ceremonies consequent on his death. It is well known that the expenditure incurred on such occasions by rich Bengal Rajas and Zamindars of high family has often impoverished them for the remainder of their lives. Instances are on record of a single funeral and Shraddha costing a sum equivalent to £120,000, the greater part of that amount being squandered on worthless Brahmans, indolent Pandits, hypocritical devotees, and vagabond religious mendicants.”

Gaya, about 55 miles south of Patna, is the most frequented place for the performance of Shraddhas. Their efficacy is such that wherever the departed relatives may be they are at once taken to Vishnu’s heaven, Vaikuntha. The expense is proportionately great. To secure the complete advantage a round of ceremonies must be performed at about a hundred distinct places, while the fees paid to the rapacious priesthood, called Gayawals, are enormous in the case of rich men.

Money for the performance of Shraddhas has often to be borrowed at high interest. When a Hindu saves any money, he often spends it on jewels. Those jewels he gives as security, while he has to pay the interest.

Sir Monier Williams justly remarks :—

“In truth, the expenditure of time, money, and energy needed to satisfy public opinion before a man is held to have discharged the debt

due to a deceased father, and before he is relieved from the long course of fasting and mourning he is expected to undergo, constitutes an evil which has gradually grown till it has become a veritable curse to the country, and one of the principal bars to any advance in its social condition. Nor is there any warrant for the system in the more ancient books held sacred in India as authoritative guides.”\*

**Moral Evils of Shraddhas.**—These are even worse than the poverty. Numbers of idle vagabonds, some of them notoriously vicious, are maintained who should work for their living. The impression is given that a man's welfare in another world depends mainly, not upon his own conduct, but on the offerings made after his death. He may lead any sort of life, however immoral and wicked, provided he leave enough to feed the Brahmans, and especially to have his Shraddha performed at Gaya. Thus encouragement is given to sin. On the other hand, a childless man is said to fall into *Put*. The great Judge of all the earth will do that which is right. A man will be rewarded or punished for his own deeds—not for those of others over which he has no control.

The whole system is clearly an invention of the Brahmans to deceive ignorant credulous Hindus and get their money. At a time when mourning the loss of relatives, they work upon their feelings, and extort from them all they can.

It is our duty to cherish the memory of our forefathers, but their happiness in a future state depends upon their own conduct—not upon our offerings. The best way of showing respect for them is by living noble lives.

#### PLANT WORSHIP.

This is a very old superstition. According to Hinduism, gods, demons, men, and animals, may transmigrate into plants. Manu says (I. 49) that plants are “possessed of consciousness, and are endowed with pleasure and pain.”

In Vedic times the Soma plant, yielding an intoxicating juice, was adored, and considered itself to be a god. At present the Tulasi plant, is looked upon as the most sacred. There are different stories of its supposed origin. One account says that it was produced at the churning of the milk sea. Another version is that a woman, named Tulasi, sought by long religious austerities, to become the wife of Vishnu. Lakshmi, hearing of this, cursed her, and changed her into the plant which bears her name and is worshipped as a deity. The following prayer is often addressed to it : “I adore that Tulasi in whose roots are all the sacred places of pilgrimage, in whose centre are all the deities, and in whose upper branches are all the Vedas.”

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\* *Religious Life and Thought in India*, pp. 278, 279.

The Tulasi is especially the Hindu woman's divinity. It is generally planted in the courtyard of respectable families, with a space around for circumambulation. All the religion of many of the women consists in walking round the Tulasi plant, in saying



TULASI PLANT.

prayers to it, or in placing offerings before it. The great object is to have sons. They walk 108 times round it, with the right shoulder always turned towards it. If the left shoulder were used, all the efficacy would be lost!

The Tulasi plant is sometimes married to a representation of Vishnu, called the Salagrama. Thousands of rupees are sometimes spent on their marriages. At one of them there was a great procession of 8 elephants, 200 camels, and 400 horses.

The Pipal is held to be a most holy tree. Some say it is occupied by the essence of Brahma, and it is occasionally invested with the sacred thread as if it were a Brahman. Others say that it is pervaded by Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. It is believed that spirits delight to sit in the branches, and listen to the rustling of the leaves.

The third most sacred plant in India is the Bilva or wood-apple. Offerings of its leaves are placed on the linga and Siva's bull.

The Nim, or Margosa, is also sacred. A string of its leaves is often hung across doorways for protection against demons and other evil influences.

Of the grasses, the Kusa is the holiest. It is used at all religious ceremonies. It sanctifies the soil, forms the most sacred of all seats, cleanses every thing it touches, purifies the impure, and when wound round the fingers makes them fit to engage in the most solemn rites. In virtue, it is nearly equal to the excrements of the cow.

#### ANIMAL WORSHIP.

Few sights are more pitiable than that of a man worshipping a beast, yet zoolatry has always prevailed among uncivilised and half-civilised races in every part of the earth.

The Hindus believe that there are 84 lakhs of different species of animals through which any man may pass. Even a flea may enclose the soul of some person who was a sage or a saint. The stories about talking beasts and birds are by ignorant Hindus looked upon as real narratives. From this belief in transmigration, many Hindus will not kill an animal of any kind.



WORSHIPPING THE SERPENT.

*Fear* is one motive why animals are worshipped. Among some of the jungle tribes the *tiger* is regarded as a god. But serpent worship is far more general. It glides stealthily about, and some species,

by a mere prick, can cause almost immediate death. About 20,000 human beings perish annually in India from snake bites. The deadly cobra is especially reverenced. The thousand-headed snake, Shesha, is sometimes represented as forming the couch and canopy of Vishnu, while sleeping during the intervals of creation. According to popular belief, earthquakes are caused by his shaking one of his heads. In some parts women go to snake holes, and place there offerings of milk and eggs, with invocations and prayers. Serpent worship prevails largely among the negroes of Western Africa.

The monkey is considered sacred, perhaps on account of its resemblance, in some respects, to human beings, and from its strange ways. It was worshipped, like the tiger, by the aborigines, and afterwards adopted by the Brahmans. In some parts of the country Hanuman is a very common village god. He is said to have been the son of Pavana, 'the wind,' by a monkey mother. He could assume any form at will, hurl rocks, remove mountains, put the sun in one of his armpits, and dart through the air like lightning. Surasi, a Rakshasi, tried to swallow him. Hanuman stretched himself so much that her mouth was a hundred yojanas wide; then he suddenly shrank up to the size of a thumb, darted through her, and came out at her right ear !



HANUMAN.

Hanuman's "traditions and attributes," says Sir A. Lyall, "illustrate curiously the process by which a mere animal fetich, dreaded for his ugliness and half-human ways, soon rises to be an elfin king of the monkey tribe, next becomes a powerful genius, and latterly emerges into the full glory of divine *Avatar*, surrounded by the most extravagant

fables to explain away the simian (monkey) head and tail which have stuck to him through all his metamorphoses."\*

Some animals are worshipped for their usefulness. This applies especially to the cow and bull.

Great religious changes have taken place among the Hindus. One of the most remarkable is the feeling with regard to the cow. In Vedic times the *Gomedha*, or cow sacrifice, was common. When a person died, a cow was killed to accompany him. The flesh of the cow was freely eaten.† A guest was called *Goghna*, he for whom a cow is killed. It is pretended by some that the animals were not really killed; but the *Atharva Veda* gives a list of the different persons who were to receive the various parts when cut up. Some say that animals were always restored to life again; but this must have been done after they were eaten.

At present the idea of eating beef is so horrible to Hindus, that some never mention the word in the vernacular, and frequently there have been serious riots on account of the slaughter of cows. Among the Sikhs it was considered a greater crime to kill a cow than to kill a daughter.

The cow, valuable for its milk, is the animal which receives most worship in India. There is an annual ceremony in her honour. The prayer is sometimes offered: "O mother, be gracious to us. Bless us with a rich harvest. Let our lands bring forth an increase. We are thy humble servants."

The ancient Egyptians were especially notorious for animal worship. Bulls received the most profound veneration. They were kept in splendid temples, they were adored and prayed to by thousands during their lives, and at their death they were placed in huge tombs, while all Egypt went into mourning. But the Hindus have reached the lowest depth of degradation in animal worship. The very excrements of the cow are sacred. Her urine is the best of all holy waters—a sin-destroying liquid which purifies every thing it touches. Cow dung is supposed to be of equal efficacy. The ashes produced by burning this hallowed substance, are of such a holy nature, that they have only to be sprinkled over a sinner to convert him into a saint. To swallow a pill composed of the five products of the cow will even purify a man who has been polluted by a visit to England.

The bull, useful in cultivation, ranks next to the cow. Siva is said to perform all his journeys riding upon its back. *Vemana*, a Telugu poet, says, "Seeing a bull made of stone, men reverently bow down before it; seeing the living moving animal, they flog it."

\* *Asiatic Studies*, p. 14.

† Full proofs are given by Dr. Rajendralala Mitra in his *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I. pp. 354—388.

Shasti is said to ride on a cat. Hence no Hindu woman will injure that animal, lest she should offend the goddess.

The Brahmany kite, supposed to represent Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, is the most sacred of birds. Offerings are made to it by throwing up bits of flesh, which it nimbly catches with its claws. It is said to destroy serpents. On this account the ancient Egyptians worshipped the bird ibis.

### TOOL WORSHIP.

In the Vedas hymns are addressed to the sacrificial implements. The posts to which victims were tied were asked to bestow "wealth and progeny." A hymn is especially dedicated to the arrow. It is



CARPENTER WORSHIPPING HIS TOOLS.

addressed : " Arrow, whetted by charms, fly when discharged ; go, light among the adversaries ; spare not one of the enemy." The ladle, a kind of large spoon, likewise receives great honour. " We revile not the ladle which is of exalted race ; verily, we assert the dignity of the wooden implement. The ladle has established the sky."

Every object that benefits the Hindu and helps to provide him with a livelihood becomes for the time being his fetich or god. On particular days the farmer prays to his plough, the fisher to his net, the writer adores his pen, the banker his account books, the carpenter his tools, the woman her basket and other articles that assist her in her household labours. The Thugs, who murdered travellers in the name of the goddess Kali, worshipped the pickaxe which they carried for the speedy burial of their victims.

#### RIVER AND WATER WORSHIP.

The tendency to worship anything useful has been noticed. The fertility of Egypt depends upon the river Nile; hence it was early regarded as a deity. In the times of the Vedas, the Aryans had not advanced far into India; the Ganges is therefore only twice mentioned in the hymns. The Indus was the most celebrated river. The Saraswati, as a goddess, protected the Aryans from their eastern enemies.

In later times the Ganges was generally considered to be the most sacred of all rivers. It is said to flow from the toe of Vishnu, and to have been brought down from heaven by the prayers of the saint Bhagirathi to purify the ashes of the 60,000 sons of King Sagara. Ganga was angry at being brought down from heaven, and Siva, to save the earth from the shock of her fall, caught the river on his matted hair.



BATHING IN THE GANGES.

The following is a prayer addressed to the river : " Oh, Mother Ganga ! I now bow at thy feet, have mercy on thy servant. Who can describe thy virtues ? Were the greatest of sinners, the perpetrator of endless crimes to pronounce the word Ganga, he, being delivered from all his sins, shall be translated to the blissful abode of the celestials." Hence the countless temples with flights of

steps lining its banks ; hence the array of priests, called 'sons of the Ganges,' sitting on the edge of its streams, ready to aid the ablutions of conscience-stricken bathers, and stamp them as white-washed when they emerge from the stream. Hence also the constant traffic carried on in transporting Ganges water to all parts of the country.

The Agni Purana declares that " those who die when half their body is immersed in Ganga water, shall be happy thousands of thousands of ages and resemble Brahma." This false superstition has led to a very barbarous practice in Bengal, where the Ganges is especially worshipped. When a person is supposed to be dying, he is carried to the Ganges and laid down upon its banks, sometimes surrounded by beings like himself, whose shrieks and groans disturb his repose. A few minutes before his death he is again brought to the brink of the river, when the body is half immersed in water ; while Ganges water and mud are put into his mouth.



Sometimes people lie for days on the river bank, unwilling to return home as their friends would refuse to take them in. When a person is dying, every thing should be done to lessen his sufferings ; but through this false notion every thing is rather done to increase the agony. Many lives are thus shortened, and in some cases people are even murdered by those who wish to get their property.

Hindu mothers sometimes offered children in sacrifice to the Ganges. The British Government had to place guards at Sagar Island, where the Ganges joins the sea, to stop the practice.

Only Brahmins living near the Ganges profited by the supposed sanctity of the river. Those in the south make the people believe that the water of the Ganges comes once in twelve years to Kumbakonam, in the Madras Presidency, and lakhs of people go to bathe in a muddy tank.

The Narbada (bliss-giver) has its admirers who exalt it even above the Ganges. It is said to have sprung from the perspiration of the god Rudra. "One day's ablution," they say, "in the Ganges frees from all sin, but the mere sight of the Narbada purifies from guilt." Furthermore, either bank of the Narbada may be used for burning the dead, whereas only the northern bank of the Ganges is effectual for that purpose. Sanctity is also claimed, more or less, for other rivers, as the Godavary, Cavery, &c. Chapters, called Mahatmyas, extolling the virtues of their waters, have been introduced into the Puranas.

On the other hand, a river, called Karmanasa, 'destroyer of good works,' which falls into the Ganges, is held to be so unholy that if a man touches its water he loses all the merit he has acquired.

It is considered highly meritorious to follow on foot a sacred river from its source to the sea and then back again.

Some wells are considered sacred as well as rivers. They were very common in Europe, and belief in them has among some not yet died out. People drank their water or bathed in it, leaving behind them a scrap of their clothing or a small piece of money as an offering.

In India, two wells at Benares are considered specially holy. One is called *Gyan Kup*, "well of knowledge," in which it is believed the god Siva resides. Pilgrims cast into the water flowers and other offerings to the deity below. As the mixture produces a constant state of putrefaction, the stench is most disgusting.

The *Manikarnika* well is still more sacred. The *Kashi Khanda* says that Vishnu dug this well with his discus, and in lieu of water filled it with the perspiration from his own body. Mahadeva, looking into the well, beheld in it the beauty of a hundred millions of suns. In his joy an ear-ring called Manikarnaka, fell from his ear into the well; hence its name. Among other epithets it is called *Mukti-shetra*; seat of liberation.

Stone steps on four sides lead down to the well, which is only two or three feet deep. From the lakhs of pilgrims bathing in it, some of them filthy and covered with sores, the water is so stinking, that the air is polluted for some distance around. The worshipper descending into the water laves his head and body with the vile liquid, repeating certain phrases. It is believed that this stinking water will infallibly wash away all the sins of the soul and make it pure and holy. Many come hoping thus to remove in one minute the crimes and sins of a life-time.

**Remarks on River and Water Worship.**—The Ganges has its source, like many other rivers, in the Himalayas, from the snow and rain which fall upon the mountains. Its water does not differ a whit from that of any other river.

If a man were dying of thirst in the desert and some one gave him water, would it be right for him to thank the water and not the giver? Instead of worshipping the Ganges, people should worship its great Creator.

Many Hindus believe that by bathing in the Ganges, or in some other rivers considered sacred, they will be able to wash away their sins. Suppose a washerman puts all the dirty clothes he has for washing into a box and shutting the lid, washes and rubs the outside of the box ever so much; will the clothes inside the box become clean thereby? It is sin that has to be washed away. This is not sticking on the surface of the body, but is inside the heart.

Suppose a man robs you, but goes quickly and bathes in the Ganges, you afterwards catch him and charge him with the theft. He replies that he went immediately and bathed in the Ganges, so that his guilt was blotted out? Would you accept this excuse? You would think that he was making a fool of you.

How many men go from the river every morning to their shops, and there lie and defraud their customers! Look at the number of abandoned characters living on the very banks of the Ganges, and daily performing their ablutions in its sacred stream! The Ganga-putras, at Benares, are notorious for their lying and rapacity.

The lot of those hurried to the Ganges in their last moments, in the vain hope of thus entering heaven, is peculiarly sad. They go down to death with "a lie in their right hand."

#### LIVING MEN CONSIDERED DIVINE.

Brahmans claim to have sprung from the mouth of Brahma. According to Manu, the Brahman, being the first-born and the rightful possessor of the Veda, is the chief of the whole creation. Whatever exists in the universe is all in effect the wealth of the Brahman. It is through his benevolence that other mortals enjoy life. Power and glory reside in every part of his body; the Ganges is in his right ear; his mouth is that of God Himself; the cow of plenty are the hairs of his body.

Manu further affirms that a "Brahman is a mighty god, a supreme divinity whether he be learned or unlearned, and even if employed in inferior occupations." "From his birth alone a Brahman is regarded as a divinity even by the gods." The Brahmans claim to have frightened, kicked and cursed even the gods.

Manu threatens the following punishments when Brahmans are injured: "A man who basely assaults a Brahman with an intention

to hurt him, shall be whirled about for a century in a hell called Tamisri ; but having smitten him in anger and by design, even with a blade of grass, he shall be born in 21 transmigrations from the wombs of impure animals."



BRAHMAN WORSHIP.

Whatever crimes a Brahman may have committed, the king must on no account put him to death ; he may, at the most, banish him, allowing him to take all his property with him.

On the other hand, gifts to Brahmans are most meritorious. " If a man sell his cow he will go to hell ; if he give her to a Brahman he will go to heaven." If on Ganga's anniversary whole villages are given to Brahmans, the person presenting them will be a million times more glorious than the sun, he will have a million virgins, many carriages and palanquins with jewels, and he will live in heaven with his father as many years as there are particles in the land given to Brahmans."

The following rewards are promised in the Puranas for reverencing Brahmans : " Whatever good man bows to a Brahman, reverencing him as Vishnu, is blessed with long life, sons, renown and prosperity. But whatever foolish man does not bow down to a Brahman in earth, Kesava desires to strike off his head with his discus." " Whatever good man worships a Brahman by walking round him, obtains the merit of going round the world with its seven continents."

The dust from a Brahman's food placed on a man's head, frees him from all sin. Another mode of attaining the same object is to drink the water into which a Brahman has dipped the great toe of his right foot.

" All the holy streams of the world go to the Ocean ;  
 " All the holy streams in the Ocean are in the Brahman's right foot."

Most Hindus have their guru. They are taught that it is better to offend the gods than the guru. If a man offend the gods, his guru can intercede on his behalf and win their favour ; but if a man offend the guru, there is none to appease his wrath. The curse of a guru will condemn a man to untold miseries in hell. Hence it is no uncommon thing when a disciple meets his guru to prostrate himself before him, and take the very dust from his feet and place it on his head.

The guru, when he receives a disciple, whispers into his ear a mantra which must never be repeated to another person or the most deadly results are threatened. Only the words are given without their meaning. It should be repeated at least morning and evening ; but as there is great virtue in repeating it, many say it 108 times a day.

The guru pays annual or more frequent visits to his disciples, when he is treated with great honour, and receives his fees.

Some Vaishnavas look upon their Acharyas as living embodiments of the deity (*sarva-deva-mayah*). An ignorant bigoted old man calls himself *jagat guru* the Teacher of the World. In some cases, at initiation, persons are branded with the discus and conch shell of Vishnu.

The depth of debasement is reached in the case of the Vallabha sect, a division of the Vaishnavas. Their chief priests, called Maharajas, are regarded as incarnations of Krishna. Men and women prostrate themselves at their feet, offering them incense, fruits and flowers, and waving lights before them. It is believed that the best way of propitiating Krishna in heaven is by ministering to the sensual appetites of the Maharajas. Body, soul and property (*tan, man, dhan*), are to be wholly made over to them. Women are taught to believe that the highest bliss will be secured to themselves and their families by intercourse with the Maharajas. Rich Bombay merchants, as shown at a trial in 1862, gave their wives and daughters to be prostituted as an act of religious merit to men who had ruined their health by debauchery.

It is evident that the claims of sinful mortals to divine honours are founded on falsehood. Those who reverence them are like men paying respect to base-born pretenders to royalty. Instead of a reward, they render themselves liable to severe punishment.

### PRINCIPAL HINDU GODS.

As already mentioned, the object of this Paper is to explain the Hinduism of the Itihasas, or Epic Poems, and Puranas ; but any earlier accounts of the leading deities will also be briefly noticed.

**BRAHMA (Neuter) or BRAHM.**

Sir Monier Williams says :—

" Of course it is alleged by all Saiva and Vaishnava sectarians that the gods Siva and Vishnu, as identified with the Supreme Being, are themselves the source and spring as well as the controllers of all the forces and potentialities of nature. Yet we must bear in mind that it is a rooted idea with all Hindu theologians, of whatever denomination, that the highest condition of the self-existent Being is a condition of complete quiescence and inactivity, as well as of complete oneness, solitariness, and impersonality."\*

The eternal Supreme Being, described as *nirguna*, destitute of qualities, is called Brahma (neuter). After a long period of repose, he becomes possessed of *ahankára*, self-consciousness. The three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, truth, passion and darkness are developed. Brahma places in the waters a golden egg which he broods over a whole year. From it is born Brahmá (masculine), usually represented as the maker of all things.

No temple is erected by the Hindus to the honour of that one Supreme Being whom they all profess to acknowledge, nor are there any rites prescribed for his worship.

**BRAHMA (Masculine).**

In the later hymns of the Rig Veda and in the Atharva Veda, the creator is called Visvakarman, Hiranyagarbha, and Prajápati. The name Brahma is not found in the Vedas and Brahmanas.

The common Hindu account of the origin of the castes is that they came from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of Brahma. Other theories are noticed under "Caste."

In the earlier books Brahma is represented to have become a boar, and to have raised up the earth from under the ocean. He is also said to have taken the form of a tortoise. The Mahabharata asserts that Brahma sprung from a lotus which grew on the navel of Vishnu. The boar and tortoise incarnations are also transferred to the latter. The Vaishnava authorities make Brahma superior to Siva, who they say sprang from his forehead. The Saivas, on the other hand, make Mahadeva the creator of Brahma ; they represent Brahma as worshipping the linga, and as acting as the charioteer of Rudra.

Most disgusting stories are told of Brahma the supposed creator. He was given to intoxication. The way in which he took five heads is too filthy to be described. It is said that Siva cut off his fifth head with the nail of his left hand. Thrice Brahma told a lie, and hired the cow Kámadhenu and the tree Kataki as false witnesses. On this account the gods, by their curse, deprived him of all

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\* *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 180,

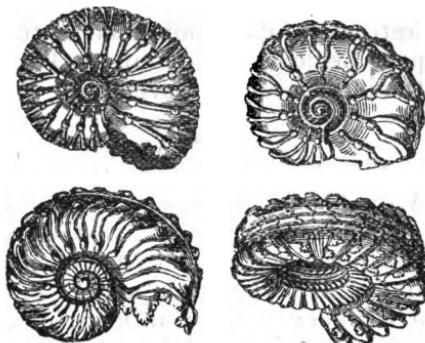
worship in this world. Pushkara, in Rajputana, is perhaps the only place where he has a temple.

## VISHNU.

The Nirukta commentary of the Rig Veda makes the three principal gods to be Agni, Indra and Surya. Vishnu is not in the first rank of the gods. He is distinguished from every other deity as striding across the heavens in three paces. This has been explained as denoting the rising, culmination, and setting of the sun. Sometimes in the Vedas he is associated with Indra. In Manu his name is scarcely mentioned, and not as that of a great deity. Some books describe him as one of the sons of Aditi, who is represented both as the mother and daughter of Daksha.

In course of time the worshippers of Vishnu claimed for him the highest place in the Hindu Pantheon. Manu says that Brahma was called Narayana, because the waters (*nara*) were his first *ayana* or place of motion. As in the case of the boar and tortoise, the worshippers of Vishnu have appropriated this name to their deity. He is painted in human form as slumbering on the serpent Shesha, and floating on the waters. The Vishnu Purana makes the following claims for Vishnu : "The world was produced from Vishnu ; it exists in him ; he is the cause of its continuance and cessation : he is the world." A hymn commences as follows : "Glory to the unchangeable, holy, eternal supreme Vishnu, of one universal nature, the mighty over all ; to him who is Hiranyagarbha (Brahma), Hari, and Shanka (Siva) ; the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world."

Vishnu is celebrated for his Avatars, their object professedly being to correct some great evil or effect some great good in the world. They are usually said to be ten in number, but the Bhagavata Purana increases them to 22, and adds that in reality they are innumerable. The principal will be noticed.



AMMONITES.

The Salagrama is worshipped by the Vaishnavas. It is said that

when Tulasi was changed into a plant, Vishnu comforted her with the assurance that he would assume the form of the Salagrama and continue near her. The Salagrama is a shell-fish, changed into stone, found in the river Gandak. It is called an ammonite, and is well known. The foregoing is a representation of some species.

The Salagrama does not require the *pran pratishtha* ceremony before it is worshipped. It is supposed to belong to the *svayambhu* class, pervaded of their own nature by the essence of the deity.

The following are some stories told of Vishnu. Before the churning of the Milk Sea, he promised to the Daitiyas that they should have their share of the *amrit*. He assumed the appearance of a beautiful woman to attract them, and when one of them began to drink the *amrit*, he cut off his head with his chakra. To deceive Siva he took the form of Mohini. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are said to have been changed into children for their misconduct with Atri's wife. To break the austerities of the wife of Bhrigu, he cut off her head. Bhrigu consequently cursed him to seven births among mortals.

#### **Parasurama.**

This incarnation, it is said, was undertaken by Vishnu to destroy the Kshatriya caste which had tried to assert its authority over the Brahmans. Another reason assigned is that some Kshatriyas killed his father, upon which he vowed to extirpate the whole race. Thrice seven times did he clear the earth of the Kshatriya caste, and filled with their blood five large lakes.

Some children were hidden from his rage among the other castes, and in time grew up to be warriors. He therefore destroyed them one after another as they reached manhood, till not a single male Kshatriya was left, when the Brahmans cohabited with their wives.

This ruthless destruction of a whole race in the interests of the Brahmans is a poor evidence of divinity. Parasurama may be characterised as the incarnation of Revenge.

#### **Rama.**

The Ramayana, describing this incarnation, is the most popular work in India. Valmiki asks of Narada, "Who is the bravest and best man that ever lived on earth?" Narada then relates the history of Rama, son of Dasaratha, reigning at Ayodhya. The book makes the following claim : "He who reads and repeats this holy life-giving Ramayana is liberated from all his sins, and exalted with his posterity to the highest heaven."

Sita is the finest character in Hindu literature. Rama, though not equal to her, exhibits some noble traits. But the Ramayana,

while containing some beautiful passages, includes also much that is absurd and revolting. Sir Monier Williams, referring to the Itihasas, says :—

"The shape and operations of divine and semi-divine beings are generally suggestive of the monstrous, the frightful, the hideous, and the incredible; the deeds of its heroes, who are themselves half-gods, transport the imagination into the region of the wildest chimera; and a whole pantheon presents itself, teeming with grotesque and unwieldy symbols, with horrible creations, half-animals, half-gods, with man-eating ogres, many-headed giants and disgusting demons." "The capacity of an uneducated Hindu for believing the grossest absurdities and accepting the most monstrous fictions as realities, is apparently unlimited."\*

When the Ramayana was written, India had neither roads nor railways. The poet could describe Lauka, or Ceylon, in any way he pleased. The Island is now under the Queen of England, and we know that the wonderful stories told about it are mere fables.

"Rama's character," says Bishop Caldwell, "throughout is that of a human hero, characterised by human limitations, and requiring help in the accomplishment of his purposes—not that of a god. The claim set up for his having been an incarnation of Vishnu rests exclusively on the evidence of his impossible achievements in the slaughter of impossible giants and monkeys."

If Rama did not know where his own wife was, how can he know about his worshippers?

#### Krishna.

The history of Krishna is interesting as showing the gradual change of a mortal hero into a representative of one of the principal gods.



The Vishnu Purana states that when the earth, assuming the form of a cow, complained of the tyranny of Kansa to Vishnu, "the supreme lord plucked off two hairs, one white and one black, and

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\* Indian Epic Poetry, p. 50.

said to the gods : "These my two hairs shall descend upon the earth, and shall relieve her of the burden of her distress." The white hair became Balarama, and the black, Krishna.

The history of Krishna is related at great length in the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata Purana, and other works. The tenth book of the Bhagavata has been translated into Hindi under the name of *Prem Sagar*, and is very popular.

The stories connected with the history of Krishna are well known. It is said that he stole butter, and told lies to conceal his fault. He behaved most indecently with the Gopis ; Radha was the wife of Ayanaghosha, a cowherd. He is said to have had 16,100 wives and 180,000 sons.

A full account of his death is given in the Harivansa. The Yadavas went to Pindaraka, described as a tirtha, on the sea coast near Dwaraka. They took their families and thousands of courtesans, and spent the day in bathing, feasting, drinking, singing and dancing. The chief dish was roast buffalo. They drank so freely of five kinds of strong drink, that some tottered, others fell, and others became reckless. Then the men, their wives, and the courtesans danced together. The Rishi Narada is said to have taken part in the dancing and joking.

Like people who indulge in liquor, the Yadavas began to fight among themselves. For arms they seized the rushes, which became like clubs of iron. Krishna at first tried in vain to separate them. Then becoming angry, he joined in the fight, killing many of the Yadavas and all his sons. He and Balarama were left alone of their race. Balarama died when a serpent came out of his mouth. Once when Krishna was entertaining the sage Durwas, it is said that a grain of rice fell on his foot which Krishna did not remove. Upon this Durvas cursed him, and said that he should die from a wound in his foot. While Krishna was meditating under a tree, a hunter, taking him for a deer, killed him with an arrow.

In the Mahabharata generally, Krishna is little more than a great hero. When Krishna went with Arjuna to Siva to beg heavenly weapons, it is said that "Krishna reverenced Siva with voice, mind, understanding and act." The following are other passages : "Thus Madhava performed austerities for a full thousand years, propitiating Siva the god who bestows boons." "Siva is the most excellent of beings in the three worlds." "As he is the greatest of gods, he is called Mahadeva." In other parts of the Mahabharata, Siva praises Krishna's merits as much as Krishna praises him. These passages were doubtless introduced when the worship of Krishna had, to a large extent, superseded that of Siva in North India.

In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says, "Whenever there is a relaxation of duty, oh son of Bharata and an increase of impiety, I

then reproduce myself for the protection of the good and the destruction of evil-doers. I am produced in every age for the purpose of establishing duty."

"According to the teaching of this passage," says Bishop Caldwell, "Krishna's claim to be a divine incarnation falls self-refuted to the ground, for the signs of a true incarnation, as stated in this passage, are diametrically opposed to the whole tone and tenor of his life. The Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita was bound to appear for the destruction of such characters as the Krishna of the Bhagavata Purana."

"The stories related of Krishna's life do more than any thing else to destroy the morals and corrupt the imagination of Hindu youth." Krishna may be characterised as the incarnation of Lust.

#### Buddha Avatar.

It has been mentioned that when any local god became celebrated, the Brahmans adopted him as an incarnation of Vishnu or Siva. About the sixth century B.C., Buddha established a great religion in India, which subsequently spread to Burma, Siam, and China. He taught that it was useless to offer sacrifices or worship the gods. The Brahmans afterwards took him up, and represented him as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu for the purpose of teaching false doctrine. The Bhagavata Purana says: "The undiscernible Being, having assumed a mortal form, preached heretical doctrines in the three cities founded by Maya, for the purpose of destroying, by deluding them, the enemies of the gods, steadfast in the religion prescribed by the Vedas." "By his words as Buddha, Vishnu deludes the heretics."

For a god to delude men by teaching atheism, is a strange way of "establishing duty."

#### Chaitanya.

Chaitanya is little known in many parts of India; but in Bengal he is said to have 8 millions of worshippers as an incarnation of Vishnu, or rather of Krishna. He was a Brahman, born at Nadiya in Bengal, in 1485 A.D.—just two years after Luther in Europe. When 44 years of age, he gave up his Brahmanical thread and became a mendicant, going about teaching his system.

Chaitanya's chief doctrines were that caste should be abandoned, and that all who joined his sect should eat together. He forbade the use of flesh and fish, and the worshipping of those deities to whom animal sacrifices were offered. Widows were allowed to marry. His most prominent tenet was that salvation was to be obtained through faith (*bhakti*) in Krishna. At last he supposed himself to be Krishna, sometimes dancing with the milkmaids, and

went into the river Jumna, where he was drowned. His temple at Nadiya contains a small image of Krishna, and a large one of himself. Prostitutes in Bengal generally profess to be his disciples, as, being expelled from their own caste, it is only by this means that they can obtain funeral rites.

The history of Chaitanya is interesting as showing how the Hindus manufacture their gods.

### SIVA.

The Vaishnavas are the more numerous in North India; the Saivas in the south. The Madras Presidency, in 1881, had about 15½ millions of the latter, and 10½ millions of the former.

The name of Siva does not occur in the Vedas, but to gain him greater reverence, he is declared to be the same as Rudra. In the Vedas, Rudra is the howling terrible god, the father of the Maruts. Sometimes he is considered a destructive deity who brings diseases upon men and cattle; on other occasions he is beneficent, supposed to have a healing influence.

In the Ramayana, Siva is a great god, but holds a less exalted position than Vishnu. The Mahabharata, on the whole, gives Vishnu the highest honour, but it has some passages in which Siva occupies the supreme place. Attempts are also made to reconcile their conflicting claims by representing Siva and Vishnu to be the same.

In the Saiva Puranas, Siva has the pre-eminence, and there are numberless stories intended for his glorification. In the Linga Purana it is mentioned that from the egg of the universe Siva, having assumed a form, produced from his left side Vishnu and Lakshmi, and from his right side Brahma and Sarasvati.

Siva wears a necklace of bones and skulls, and carries a skull in his hand. The Saiva Puranas give the following explanation of them. At the end of a Kalpa, Siva destroys Brahma and Vishnu with the rest of the creation but he wears their bones and skulls as a garland. The skull which he holds in his hand is from the central head of Brahma which he cut off. He is therefore called *Kapali*. The ashes with which Siva smears himself were produced as follows: At the end of one of the early Kalpas, Siva reduced Brahma and Vishnu to ashes by a spark out of his central eye; after which he rubbed their ashes upon his body as an ornament. Hence the saying of the Saivas, "Without beauty is the forehead destitute of sacred ashes."

There have been many disputes between the Vaishnavas and Saivas with regard to the superiority of their respective gods.

Siva's wife, Parvati, is said often to have rebuked him for his evil habits and associating with prostitutes. She was almost ruined by

his habits of intoxication, in which he indulged to such a degree as to reddens his eyes. He danced naked before Atri, and from the curse of that Rishi was punished in a way which is too shameful to be mentioned. He was ready to part with all the merit he had acquired by his austerities in order to gratify his evil desires but once with Mohini. Daksha gave in marriage the youngest of his daughters to Siva; but he became enraged when he saw the habits of his son-in-law—a beggar, smearing his body with ashes, living where the dead are burned, and wearing a necklace of skulls. When Daksha made a great sacrifice, his daughter came; but he abused her greatly on account of her dirty and beggarly appearance, on which account she threw herself into the fire and was reduced to ashes. Upon this Siva, it is said, produced an enormous giant with three eyes, called Virabhadra, who destroyed the sacrifice of Daksha and cut off his head. Brahma and Vishnu then came bending at the feet of Siva, and at their request he put a goat's head on Daksha's body. The story is told in various ways. The Harivansa, to glorify Vishnu, makes it end differently. The sacrifice was destroyed and the gods fled in dismay, till Vishnu seized Siva by the throat, and compelled him to desist and acknowledge him master.

A feeling of modesty, found in all men except the lowest savages, requires certain parts of the body to be covered. Among the Saivas, on the other hands, they are the favourite forms of worship. What must be the moral influence of the contemplation of such objects?

The Saiva ascetics, who profess to copy the example of their lord, are some of the worst men in India. The Hindus are cleanly in their habits; but, strange to say, they appear in certain cases, to regard filth as a proof of sanctity. The Saiva beggars are dirty and disgusting. Some of them wander about quite naked. Though strong and able to work, they live in idleness, preying upon the industrious. If any refuse them alms, they threaten them with most awful curses. They stupify themselves with bhang, and are guilty of the vilest immoralities. That such men should be regarded as holy, is a sad proof of the debasing influence of Hinduism.

## GANESA.

Ganesa is said to be the son of Siva and Parvati. Soon after his birth, the gods came to see him. Sani, or Saturn, held down his head, and would not look at the child, on account of his evil influence. Parvati did not think of this, and scolded Sani. When Sani looked up, Ganesa's head was immediately reduced to ashes. Parvati, seeing her child headless, was overwhelmed with grief, and would have killed Sani. Brahma prevented her, and told Sani to go out and bring the head of the first animal he should meet lying



GANESA.

with its head northward. Sani found an elephant in this position, cut off its head, and fixed it on Ganesa. Parvati was little soothed when she saw her son with an elephant's head ; but, to please her, Brahma said that Ganesa should be the first worshipped of all the gods.

Another story is that Parvati made Ganesa from the scurf of her own body, and that his head was cut off by Siva, who did not know who he was. A third legend is so filthy that it cannot be mentioned.

The large belly of Ganesa denotes his gluttony. He is said to be very fond of sweetmeats. The story is related that Siva was, on a time, in deep distress, because one of the gods offered great sacrifices for his destruction. Siva told Ganesa how he might release him. The enemy of Siva delayed Ganesa by throwing down sweetmeats which he waited to pick up and eat.

School boys in South India pray to Ganesa to help them in their studies, and praise him by telling him how much he can eat.

An annual festival is held in his honour, called Ganesh Chaturthi. Many persons never commence a letter without praying to Ganesa.

Can we believe that God, like a spoiled child, is fond of sweetmeats ? that He is a glutton ? Suppose that Ganesa gave one of his worshippers a son exactly like himself, would he be pleased ? If

Ganesa cared more about filling his belly with sweetmeats than assisting even his own father, is it likely that he will help others?

Sir Monier Williams shows why every Indian book begins with the formula *Sri Ganesaya namah* :—

“The writing of a book is among the Hindus a very serious and solemn undertaking, peculiarly liable to obstruction from spiteful and jealous spirits of evil, and the favour of Ganesa is invoked to counteract their malignity. It never occurs to any Hindu writer to suppose for a moment that the failure of his literary efforts is ever likely to be due to his own incapacity. In this, as in all other enterprises, want of success is attributed, not to want of skill, energy, or persistency, but to negligence in taking proper precautions against demonical jealousy and obstruction.”

## GODDESSES.

The Hindus imagine their gods to be very much like themselves, having the same wants, and animated by the same passions. As a Hindu thinks it his most bounden duty to marry his son; in like manner he has provided his gods with wives,—some of them with a great variety.



KALI.

Sarasvati, the wife of Brahma, is represented as the goddess of learning ; Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, is the goddess of fortune. Space permits only the wife of Siva to be noticed in detail.

**Kali.**—The wife of Siva has several names. Uma is one of the earliest. She is called Parvati and Haimavati, because supposed to be a daughter of Himavat, the Himalayas. She is called Durgá as having overcome the giant Durgá ; Kali as black, and Bhairavi as terrible. Often she is called simply Devi, the goddess, or Mahadevi.

Calcutta derives its name from Kalighat, where there is a noted temple of Kali. She is represented as a black woman with four arms. In one hand she has a weapon, in another the head of the giant she has slain, with the two others she is encouraging her worshippers. For earrings she has two dead bodies, she wears a necklace of skulls ; her only clothing is a girdle made of dead men's hands, and her tongue protrudes from her mouth. Her eyes are red as those of a drunkard, and her breasts are besmeared with blood. She stands with one foot on the thigh and the other on the breast of her husband. After her victory over the giant she danced for joy so furiously that the earth trembled beneath her weight. At the request of the gods, Siva asked her to stop ; but as, owing to her excitement, she did not notice him, he lay down among the slain. She continued dancing until she caught sight of her husband under her feet ; upon which she thrust out her tongue.

**Saktis.**—It has been estimated that of the Hindus in Bengal, about three-fourths are devoted to the worship of Sakti, the power or energy of God as represented in some of the many female forms. Parvati, Durga, and Kali are of all deities the most commonly worshipped by the masses of Bengal. The devotees of the goddesses say that they are the causes of all created things. As without the female the male is unproductive, the female is regarded as the real force in nature.

There are two main divisions of the Saktas—the Dakshinas, or right hand worshippers, and the Vamacharis, or left hand worshippers. The former worship openly in accordance with the Puranas. The latter observe their impure rites in secret, following the Tantras, which profess to be a direct revelation from Siva to his wife Parvati. They will be noticed under another head.

The Yoni, either alone or in combination with the Linga, is an object of worship.

#### Remarks on the Hindu Gods.

The foregoing review shows the truth of the following extract from Sir Monier Williams :—

"There is not an object in heaven or earth which a Hindu is not prepared to worship—sun, moon, and stars ; rocks, stocks, and stones ; trees

shrubs, and grass ; sea, pools, and rivers ; his own implements of trade ; the animals he finds most useful, the noxious reptiles he fears, men remarkable for any extraordinary qualities—for great valour, sanctity, virtue or even vice ; good and evil demons, ghosts, and goblins, the spirits of departed ancestors ; an infinite number of semi-human and semi-divine existences, inhabitants of the seven upper and the seven lower worlds—each and all come in for a share of divine honours or a tribute of more or less adoration.”\*

“ These be thy gods, O India ! ” There is, however, one Being whom the Hindu does not worship—the one true God, the great Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe.

God indignantly said to the Jews in old times : “ Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” It is evident that the Hindu gods were conceived by wicked men, taking themselves as models.

**Brahm.**—A hot climate makes labour irksome, and gives an inclination to sleep. Brahm, the supreme divinity, is represented as sunk in unconscious slumber, like a king who spends his life within his palace in sloth, regardless of what goes on throughout his dominions. Christianity teaches that the more we resemble God the less selfish we shall be, and the more good we will do to our fellow creatures ; but the more a Hindu is like Brahm, the more selfish he must become, and the less profitable to all around him.

Such a representation of the Supreme God is as untrue as it is derogatory. He never slumbers or sleeps ; He never becomes unconscious and without attributes ; the government of the universe is not a burden to Him ; He “ fainteth not, neither is weary ; ” He is continually showering down blessings upon men, notwithstanding their disobedience to His commands and base ingratitude.

**Vishnu, Siva, &c.**—The actions attributed to these supposed deities are still more dishonouring to God. They act like Hindu kings, contending with each other for power, each favouring his own party, and indulging in every vice or committing every crime his evil heart may desire.

It is plain that the 33 crores of Hindu gods, goddesses, and demons have no existence.

**Sin of Polytheism.**—Polytheism means belief in many gods. Hindus blame Christianity for its intolerance in forbidding the worship of any other than the one true God. They consider themselves more liberal in allowing every one to worship any god or as many gods as he pleases. This is a point of very great importance ; a mistake with regard to it is fraught with the most dangerous consequences.

But it may be remarked that the Hindus are tolerant only when

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\* *Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 350.

the honour of *God* is concerned. People are at perfect liberty to neglect or despise Him all their lives, to charge Him with the foulest crimes. But let any one break their absurd caste rules, then they are most intolerant.

It has been stated that the Hindu gods resemble the Hindu kings. Under Native rule there never was among the Hindus one supreme universally acknowledged authority ; so in religion they "never attained the imperial conception of a paramount, omnipotent, actively governing Power like the commanding personality of Christianity." Polytheists are quite willing to add a new god, but it is utterly inconsistent with monotheism.

The Queen of England rules over about one-fifth of the earth's surface, and over more than 30 crores of its inhabitants. Throughout all her dominions, it is considered an act of high treason to set up any other sovereign than herself. Such a rebellion would at once be suppressed, and all who took part in it would be punished. People are not at liberty to set up any king they please. It is the same in every well-regulated state. Any other course would be fatal to the welfare of its people.

The British Empire is a very faint emblem of the vast dominions of the great Lord of all. The universe belongs to Him by creation. He spread the heaven above us. He formed the earth beneath us. He is the maker of all things visible and invisible. He first called us into existence. Asleep or awake, we are dependent upon Him for every breath that we draw. It is He who makes the rain to fall and the sun to shine. All that we have is His gift.

The nature of God's laws is an additional reason for obedience. His commands are " holy, just, and good." He enjoins only what is best for ourselves ; He prohibits only that which it is our highest wisdom to shun. Our duty and our happiness coincide.

Just as the Queen of England forbids any one from setting himself up as king within her empire, so does God forbid the worship of any other than Himself. This is His first command. He cannot permit the creatures whom He made to rise in rebellion against Himself.

God is both our Father and our King.

The worship of any other is a defiance of God's authority, a declaration that we will not have Him to rule over us. All the guilt that lies in foul rebellion against the mildest and most merciful of earthly monarchs—in disobeying the kindest and grieving the best of fathers, in ingratitude to a generous benefactor ; all this evil, multiplied a thousand times, there is in polytheism.

God is self-existent, unchangeable, infinite in power, wisdom, goodness and mercy, spotless in holiness. Who are worshipped in His stead ! Senseless blocks, blind, deaf and dumb, beasts, birds,

and creeping things, the obscene linga, and supposed deities stained with every vice.

Truly Hinduism is a mixture of sin and folly.

### HINDU RITES AND OBSERVANCES.

Some of these have already been noticed, but others require consideration.

#### IDOLS AS OBJECTS OF WORSHIP.

An *idol*, from the Greek *eidos*, form, usually denotes an image which is worshipped. The change from a stone to an idol may be very slight. A few chips or daubs of paint suffice to convert the rude block into an idol.

Idolatry occupies a kind of middle place in religion. Savages employ natural objects. Idolatry begins with lower races above barbarism, and attains its greatest development among semi-civilised nations ; among the enlightened it ceases.

In Athens, a city in ancient Greece, idols were so numerous that it was easier to find in it a god than a man. Of India also it may be said, "The land is full of idols." Popular Hinduism, as a rule, has some visible object of worship.

**Excuses for Idolatry.**—Some educated Hindus deny that the Hindus are idolaters. Mr. S. B. Thakur, at a meeting in England, said that idols are only like photographs, serving to remind us of those we loved. To this Mr. Desmukh well replied : " It is true we like to retain photographs of people we love to remind us of their form and features ; but your blocks of stone or your deformed hideous brazen images, bought at a shop in the bazaar, of what sort of Divinity do they remind us ? "

If Mr. Thakur had brought out to this country the image of a donkey with an ape's head on it to show to his friends as a representative of the Queen of England, this would have been an outrage against propriety infinitely less revolting than that for which he pleaded.

Rammohun Roy explains how the above excuse for idolatry originated :—

" Some Europeans, imbued with high principles of liberality, but unacquainted with the ritual part of Hindu idolatry, are disposed to palliate it by an interpretation which, though plausible, is by no means well-founded. They are willing to imagine that the idols which the Hindus worship, are not viewed by them in the light of gods or as real personifications of the divine attributes, but merely as instruments for raising their minds to the contemplation of those attributes, which are respectively represented by different

figures. I have frequently had occasion to remark that many Hindus also who are conversant with the English language, finding this interpretation a more plausible apology for idolatry than any with which they are furnished by their own guides, do not fail to avail themselves of it, though in repugnance both to their faith and to their practice. The declarations of this description of Hindus naturally tend to confirm the original idea of such Europeans who, from the extreme absurdity of pure unqualified idolatry, deduce an argument against its existence."

Rammohun Roy further shows the falsity of the excuse :—

" Neither do they regard the images of these gods merely in the light of instruments for elevating the mind to the conception of those supposed beings; they are simply in themselves made objects of worship. For whatever Hindu purchases an idol in the market, or constructs one with his own hands, or has one made under his own superintendence, it is his invariable practice to perform certain ceremonies, called *Pran Pratishtha*, or the endowment of animation, by which he believes that its nature is changed from that of the mere materials of which it is formed, and that it acquires not only life but supernatural powers. Shortly afterwards, if the idol be of the masculine gender, he marries it to a feminine one: with no less pomp and magnificence than he celebrates the nuptials of his own children. The mysterious process is now complete; and the god and goddess are esteemed the arbiters of his destiny, and continually receive his most ardent adoration."

The life which by one ceremony has been brought into the idol, can by another ceremony be taken out.

The excuse is made that the poor and ignorant need images to remind them of God. They cannot understand His form for He has none. They can remember their parents when far distant; they can love a benefactor whom they have never seen; they can obey the authority of a Queen-Empress though she never set foot on their soil. They can worship God who is a spirit in spirit and in truth. Idols are a hindrance—not a help to true worship. They give most degrading ideas of God. Would a father be pleased if a son kept a toad to remind him of his father in his absence?

**Folly of Idolatry.**—Idolatry has been well compared to child's play. Little children talk to their dolls as if they had life. They dress them, pretend to give them food, put them to sleep, and so forth. Grown up people do just the same. They treat their idols as living beings. They offer them food, though they cannot eat; they have different kinds of music before images that cannot hear; they wave lights before what cannot see. In the cold season they furnish them with warm clothes; in the hot season they fan them; and lest mosquitoes should bite them, they place them within curtains at night.

Instead of the idols taking care of their worshippers, it is the

latter who have to protect the former. They are constantly afraid lest the hands and feet of their gods should be broken. Robbers sometimes break into temples, and carry off the jewels. The gods cannot give even one good screech for help. Cockroaches sometimes destroy the colour of images ; rats make holes in them ; bats defile them ; flies, after sitting upon various unclean things, alight on them. Where is their divinity, seeing they suffer themselves to be thus insulted ?

Nearly 3,000 years ago the folly of idolatry was thus shown in the Bible :—

Their idols are silver and gold,  
The work of men's hands.  
They have mouths, but they speak not,  
Eyes have they, but they see not,  
They have ears, but they hear not,  
Noses have they, but they smell not ;  
Feet have they, but they walk not,  
Neither speak they through their throat.  
They that make them are like unto them,  
So is every one that trusteth in them. *Psalm. cxv, 4—8*

They lavish gold out of the bag,  
And weigh silver in the balance ;  
And hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god,  
They fall down, yea, they worship,  
They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him,  
And set him in his place, and he standeth,  
From his place shall he not remove ;  
Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer,  
Nor save him out of his trouble. *Isaiah, xlvi. 6, 7.*

He heweth him down cedars ;  
And taketh the cypress and the oak,  
Which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest ;  
He planteth a fir  
And the rain doth nourish it,  
Then shall it be for a man to burn,  
For he will take thereof and warm himself,  
Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ;  
Yea, he maketh a god and worshippeth it,  
He maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.  
He burneth part thereof in the fire,  
With part thereof he eateth flesh,  
He roasteth roast, and is satisfied ;  
Yea, he warmeth himself, and saith,  
Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire ;  
And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image.  
He falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it ;  
And he prayeth unto it, and saith,

Deliver me, for thou art my god.  
 And none considereth in his heart,  
 Neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say,  
 I have burned part of it in the fire,  
 Yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof,  
 I have roasted flesh and eaten it;  
 And shall I make the residue thereof an abomination ?  
 Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree ?  
 He feedeth on ashes,  
 A deceived heart hath turned him aside ;  
 That he cannot deliver his soul, nor say,  
 Is there not a lie in my right hand ?

*Isaiah, xliv.*

We are not to attempt to make images of God Himself. Can any goldsmith form an image of a man's soul ? God is a spirit, and it is equally impossible to make an image of Him. "To whom will ye liken me or shall I be equal ? saith the Holy One."

**Degrading Effects of Idolatry.**—Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita : "The mind by continually meditating on a material object becomes materialized." People who worship senseless images end by becoming like them. They are deceived and cheated by their religious teachers in every possible way, but they do not see through the fraud.

The debasing influence of idolatry is thus described by Rammohun Roy :—

"Idolatry, as now practised by our countrymen, must be looked upon with great horror by common sense, as leading directly to immorality and destructive of social comforts. For every Hindu who devotes himself to this absurd worship, constructs for that purpose a couple of male and female idols, sometimes indecent in form, as representatives of his favorite deities ; he is taught and enjoined from his infancy to contemplate and repeat the history of these, as well as their fellow deities, though the actions ascribed to them be only a continued series of debauchery, sensuality, falsehood, ingratitude, breach of trust, and treachery to friends. There can be but one opinion respecting the moral character to be expected of a person, who has been brought up with sentiments of reverence to such beings, who refreshes his memory relative to them almost every day, and who has been persuaded to believe, that a repetition of the holy name of one of these deities, or a trifling present to his image or to his devotees, is sufficient not only to purify and free him from all crimes whatsoever, but to procure to him future beatitude."

#### MODES OF WORSHIP.

##### Prayer.

Prayer is usually considered a most important part of religion. It means asking earnestly, especially from a being higher than ourselves.

Brahmans have long forms of prayer. The Gayatri, addressed to the sun, is considered the most sacred. Sayana renders it into ordinary Sanskrit with this meaning : " We meditate on that desirable light of the radiant sun which animates all our acts." It is simply an invocation to the sun to render religious performances successful.

When prayers for particular objects are offered by Hindus, they are generally for temporal blessings,—a son, the health of the family, prosperity in business, &c. As a rule, they satisfy themselves with repeating the names of their gods. The more frequently this is done, the merit is supposed to be the greater. To enable them to keep count, rosaries, sometimes of 108 beads, are used. A longer and still more meritorious task is to repeat the thousand names of Vishnu. Peculiar importance is attached to Vishnu's name Hari. When a dying person is placed in the Ganges, " Say Hari," is the charge given to him.

The mere repetition of the words, whatever may be the object, is considered efficacious. Hence children are generally named after some god, that merit may accrue whenever they are called for any purpose. A parrot is sometimes taught to repeat them, the merit going to the owner. The people of Tibet, to the north of India, suppose that if a prayer is written out on paper and turned round, that this is equal to its repetition. They have therefore prayer wheels driven by the wind or stream of water. Thus a Tibetan, asleep or awake, supposes that he is laying up a stock of merit. The Durga Mahatmya, quoted by Rammohan Roy, says : " He who pronounces Durga, though he constantly practise adultery, plunder others of their property, or commit the most heinous crimes, is freed from all sins."



TIBETAN PRAYER WHEEL,

The following story is told to show the virtue of merely repeating the name of a god :

Ajamila had committed the most enormous crimes, having killed cows and Brahmans, drunk spirits, and lived in the practice of evil all his days. He had four sons ; the name of one was Narayana. In the hour of death, Ajamila was very thirsty, and thus called to his son : " Narayana, Narayana, Narayana, give me some water." After his death, the messengers of Yama seized him, and were about to drag him to a place of punishment ; when Vishnu's messengers came to rescue him. A furious battle took place ; but Vishnu's messengers were victorious, and carried off Ajamila to Vishnu's heaven. Yama demanded of Vishnu an explanation of this affair. Vishnu reminded him that however wicked this man might have been, he had repeated the name Narayana in his last moments ; and that if any man, either when laughing or by accident, or in anger, or even in derision, repeated the name of Vishnu, he would certainly go to heaven, though like Ajamila, covered with crimes, and without a single meritorious deed to be laid in the balance against them.

Hence a Hindu when dying, is not asked to repent of his sins, but merely to repeat the name of his god as a passport to heaven.

Prayers for the destruction of enemies are sometimes offered. The Kalika Purana gives the following directions about praying to Kali for this object :—

" Let the sacrificer repeat the word Kali twice, and say ' Hail, Devi ! goddess of thunder ; hail, iron-sceptred goddess ! ' let him then take the axe in his hand, and again invoke the same by the Kalaratri text as follows : ' Let the sacrificer say Harang, Harang ! Kali, Kali ! Oh horrid-toothed goddess ! Eat, cut, destroy all the malignant ; cut with this axe ; bind, bind ; seize, seize ; drink blood ! Spheng, spheng ! secure, secure. Salutation to Kali.' The axe being invoked by this text, called the Kalaratri Mantra, Kalaratri herself presides over the axe, uplifted for the destruction of the sacrificer's enemies."

**Remarks.**—Merely to repeat the name of a god is foolish. Suppose a child should go on saying, " Father, father, father, father ! " he might almost be supposed to have lost his senses. The father would say, " Son, what do you want ? " Suppose a man sent in a petition only with the words, " Maharaja ! Maharaja ! Maharaja ! Maharaja ! " what would be thought of him ?

True prayer is asking for some blessing. It expresses the desire of the heart : mere words are of no avail. The three blessings which we especially need are the forgiveness of sin, heart purity, and happiness in heaven.

The belief that merely repeating the name of a god at death will secure salvation is a great encouragement to sin. Suppose an earthly king made a law that every criminal would be pardoned if

he simply repeated his name, what would be the consequence ? The country would be deluged with crime, and become like a hell. Can we suppose that the great Lord of the Universe is guilty of such folly ? Persons who think this are only believing a lie, and they will find out their mistakes when it is too late.

### Private and Temple Worship.

Worship varies very much in Hindu families. Some rich men, beside a priest, have an image to which offerings of flowers, fruits, &c., are presented. The people generally have no regular daily household worship. Shopkeepers have an image of Ganesa to which they pay respect before commencing business.

The richer worshippers of Vishnu have a Salagrama in their house, which is carefully kept and regarded as a living being. In the hot season it is bathed and cooled. The tulasi plant is also most diligently tended. Saivite women, when they go to the rivers to bathe, make a linga of mud. As they are not taught the mantras, their worship consists in bowing the head or body to this little image, after which it is thrown into the river.

Dr. Rajendralala Mitra describes the ceremonies performed at the great Saiva temple of Bhuvanesvara in Orissa. Siva is there worshipped under the form of a large uncarved block of granite, about 8 feet long, partly buried in the ground, partly apparent above the soil to the height of about 8 inches. The block is believed to be a linga of the Svayambhu class, pervaded of their own nature by the essence of the deity.

The daily worship consists of no less than 22 ceremonial acts :

- (1) At the first appearance of dawn bells are rung to rouse the deity from his slumbers ; (2) a lamp with many wicks is waved in front of the stone ; (3) the god's teeth are cleaned by pouring water and rubbing a stick about a foot long on the stone ; (4) the deity is washed and bathed by emptying several pitchers of water on the stone ; (5) the god is dressed by putting clothes on the stone ; (6) the first breakfast is offered, consisting of grain, sweetmeats, curd, and cocoanuts ; (7) the god has his principal breakfast, when cakes and more substantial viands are served ; (8) a kind of little lunch is offered ; (9) the god has his regular lunch ; (10) the mid-day dinner is served, consisting of curry, rice, pastry, cakes, cream, &c., while a priest waves a many-flamed lamp and burns incense before the stone ; (11) strains of noisy discordant music rouse the deity from his afternoon sleep at 4 P.M., the sanctuary having been closed for the preceding four hours ; (12) sweetmeats are offered ; (13) the afternoon bath is administered ; (14) the god is dressed as in the morning ; (15) another meal is served ; (16) another bath is administered ; (17) the full dress ceremony takes place, when fine costly vestments, yellow flowers and perfumery are placed on the stone ; (18) another offering of food follows ; (19) after an hour's interval the regular supper is served ; (20)

five masks and a Damaru, used in dancing, are brought in and oblations made to them ; (21) waving of lights before bedtime ; (22) a bedstead is brought into the sanctuary and the god composed to sleep.”\*

Lastly, the god is sometimes told, “ Parvati awaits you.”

The worship of Vishnu is much of the same character, but no animal food is offered. The following is part of the address to the god when waking him with singing and music in the morning :—

“ The darkness has departed ; the flowers have opened and diffused around their fragrance ; behold the dawn of day and the morning breeze ! Arise, therefore, thou that sleepest in thy bedchamber.”

The cooked food offered to the idol is afterwards eaten by the priests and attendants. At some places (for example at a particular temple in Benares) considerable portions are sold at high prices to outside applicants. The water in which the idol is washed is called *tirtha*, and is drunk as holy water.

In Vedic times sacrifice was considered so important that it was called “ the navel of the world.” Largely through the influence of Buddhism, animal sacrifices were discontinued. At present they are chiefly offered in connection with the worship of Kali. Human sacrifices were formerly offered, and it is believed that they have not yet entirely ceased. In the Kalika Purana, Siva, addressing his sons, says :—

“ The flesh of the antelope and the rhinoceros give my beloved (Kali) delight for 500 years. By a human sacrifice, attended by the forms laid down, Devi is pleased for a thousand years ; and by the sacrifice of three men a lakh of years : an oblation of blood which has been rendered pure by holy texts, is equal to ambrosia. Blood drawn from the offerer’s own body is looked upon as a proper oblation to the goddess Chandika.”

The temple of Kali near Calcutta at great festivals almost swims with blood, and the smell is most sickening. The people bring their victims, pay the fee, and the priest puts a little red lead on its head. When their turn comes, the executioner takes the animal, fixes its head in a frame, and then beheads it. A little of the blood is placed in front of the idol, and the pilgrim takes away the headless body.

Dr. Rajendralala Mitra says, “ There is scarcely a respectable house in all Bengal, the mistress of which has not at one time or other shed her own blood under the notion of satisfying the goddess by the operation.”

The Khonds, or, hill men, of Orissa, believed that their field would not yield crops unless the Earth Goddess was propitiated by human sacrifice. A boy was bought in the low country and brought up to the hills, where he was well treated till the time of sacrifice.

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\* Quoted in *Religious Thought and Life in India*, pp. 93, 94.

At the appointed day the victim was tied to a post. The priest said, "We have bought you with a price, and no sin rests on us."



KHOND HUMAN SACRIFICE.

To prevent his offering any resistance, his arms and legs were broken with a hatchet. The priest first cut a portion of the flesh from the body and offered it to the earth goddess. All the people then cut the flesh from the bones, and buried it in their fields to make them fertile. In 1837, when the British Government heard of the custom, officers were appointed to suppress it, and after a time they were successful.

In the Bombay Presidency numbers of young girls are married to Khandoba, supposed to be an incarnation of Siva, and are called Murlis. After undergoing a ceremonial "purification," they are branded with a heated stamp. Although nominally wives of the god, they are simply prostitutes.

The following extract from Dubois refers to the temples of Southern India:—

"Next to the sacrificers, the most important persons about the temples are the dancing girls, who call themselves *deva-dasi*, *servants or slaves of the gods*. Their profession requires of them to be open to the embraces of persons of all castes.

"They are bred to this profligate life from their infancy. They are taken from any caste, and are frequently of respectable birth. It is nothing uncommon to hear of pregnant women, in the belief that it will tend to their happy delivery, making a vow, with the consent of their husbands, to devote the child then in the womb, if it should turn out a girl, to the service of the Pagoda. And, in doing so, they imagine they

are performing a meritorious duty. The infamous life to which the daughter is destined brings no disgrace on the family.”\*

According to the Madras Census of 1881, the number of female “dancers” in the Presidency was 11,573.† Such a number is most lamentable.

The indignant words of Bishop Lightfoot, applied to ancient Greece, refer equally to India :—

“Imagine, if you can, this licensed shamelessness, this consecrated profligacy, carried on under the sanction of religion and in the full blaze of publicity, while statesmen and patriots, philosophers and men of letters looked on unconcerned, not uttering one word and not raising one finger to put it down.”‡

The rites of the Vamacharis are most infamous, yet they are celebrated in the name of religion. The “extinction of desire” is considered to be the grand Hindu aim, securing absorption. Ascetics profess to seek it by fasting and other penances; thus, as it were, mortifying or killing desire. The Vamacharis seek to arrive at it by gratifying desire. They drink spirits, eat flesh and fish, indulge their lust, and are quite content: they want nothing further. A woman perfectly naked is the chief object of worship. “The only salvation,” says a Tantra, “is that which results from spirituous liquors, meat, and cohabitation with women.” The Shyama Rahasya says, “Wine, flesh, fish, women, and maithuna,” are the fivefold *Makara*, which takes away all sin.” The horrible doctrine is held that this is “the door to the highest form of salvation—complete union with the Supreme Being (*sayujya-mukti*).”

**Devices to raise Money.**—The idol is sometimes put in chains. After the custom of the Hindus, the god got into debt. The people are told that the creditors refuse to set him at liberty until the whole sum has been paid. Alarmed at the sight of their deity in irons, they come forward with the sum required, and the idol is restored to liberty. In some noted temples, as that at Tirupati, silver chains are used instead of iron.

Another trick is to make the people suppose that the idol has got very ill, brought on by grief at seeing the devotion of the people becoming less and less. The priests take down the idol, rub it with various drugs, and set before it all sorts of medicines, while messengers are sent out to spread the news. The people believing this imposture, hasten with gifts and offerings. The deity beholding such proofs of reviving piety, feels himself better, and resumes his place.

The Hindus, in the cities, are now becoming too intelligent for

\* Manners and Customs of People of India, pp. 294, 295.

† Imperial Census, vol. II. p. 448.      ‡ White Cross Tracts, No. 1.

such frauds to be practised, but some years ago they were very common.

Is it not blasphemy, or speaking evil of God, to think that the great Lord of the universe goes to sleep and requires to be awakened in the morning by human beings, to take a nap through the day, and to be put to sleep at night? An account will afterwards be given of Christian worship, which may be compared with the foregoing.

### HINDU FESTIVALS.

The Hindus have no special day of the week for worship, as Sunday among Christians and Friday among Muhammadans. There are, however, numerous festivals held throughout the year. At these times little work is done. Some attend them as a religious duty; others for amusement; many combine both objects.

Only a few of the leading festivals can be noticed.

**The Durga Puja.**—This is the chief festival in Bengal, while in South India it is scarcely known. It is intended to celebrate the victory over the Asura Sambha, who attacked Durga under the form of a buffalo. Hence the goddess is called Mahisha-mardini. The story of the fight is so extravagant, that any one except a Hindu would laugh at it for its absurdity.

The first part of the festival is the *bodhana* or the awaking of the goddess, who is supposed to have been sleeping for the past



DURGA IN BOAT.

two months. She is invited to come to the house, and dwell in the image which has been prepared for her. After this the *pran pratista* ceremony is performed. For three days the worship is continued. Offerings and sacrifices are made. Kids are usually the victims, but, in some cases, buffaloes. The following prayer is offered : "Grant me, O lady, long life, fair name, good fortune, sons, riches, and all other desires."

On the afternoon of the fourth day, the goddess is supposed to take leave of the image, which is afterwards thrown into the river.

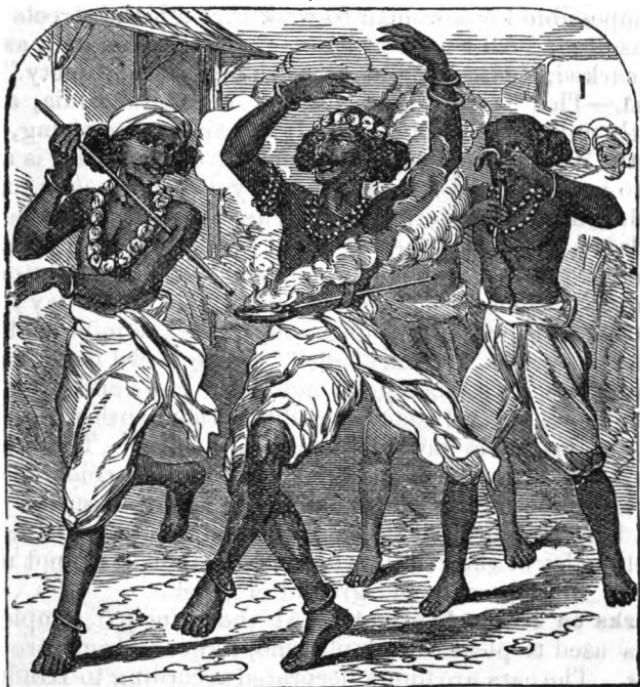
The following remarks on the Durga Puja are abridged from the *Indian Messenger* :—

" It has features which at once command our sympathy. The resources of the poorest are now taxed to make little love-offerings to those to whom they are bound by social ties. Brothers hasten home from their distant places of business, once more lighting up with their countenances the long-deserted homes. But alas ! there are other features as well which produce quite another impression upon the mind. This wave of national sentiment also covers an amount of self-indulgence and excess, which is quite appalling. This is also the period for all the votaries of pleasure to run headlong into their vicious excesses. Drunkenness and debauchery will ride rampant in the land for many days." Sept. 25, 1887.

" In the gaiety of children released from their books, in the pleasures of well-earned rest, in the hospitalities of brotherhood, in the courtesies of friendship, in the joys of family gatherings, in the happy greetings to loving hearts long separated, we can all rejoice." It is sad, however, that this innocent pleasure should be connected with a festival to celebrate a lie, and with thanksgiving to an idol instead of the great Creator and Giver of all good. Other objectionable features are noticed above. No man with any claim to decency should have nautches in his house, with prostitutes as performers. Apologies for the Durga Puja will be mentioned under another head.

**The Charak Puja.**—Some of the Hindu divinities, like Kali, are supposed to be pleased when their worshippers torture themselves. The Charak Puja is said to be held in commemoration of an interview with Siva which an ancient king obtained through his great austerities. It is so called from the hook swinging which formerly constituted the principal part of the festival.

The devotees of Siva, belonging to the lower classes, assume the dress and profession of sannyasis. On the first day some of them throw themselves down from a bamboo platform upon knives that are so arranged that they fall down under the weight of the body. Processions of these men parade the streets to the great temple of Kali. Some of them are represented in the picture below. One man has passed an iron rod through the flesh of his left arm, which



he moves about to enlarge the wound and cause the blood to flow. The second has passed the handle of a fire shovel, full of burning coals, through the flesh of his side, and dances with it. The third has made a hole in his tongue through which he has passed a live serpent; and by pinching its tail he causes it to writhe about, increasing his own suffering.

Such worship is more suitable to a blood-thirsty demon than to God.

**Dasara, or Dasahara.**—This festival is in memory of the Ganges coming from heaven to earth to restore to life the 60,000 sons of King Sagara, born in a pumpkin and nourished in pans of milk, who had been reduced to ashes. No sooner did her waters touch the ashes, than they all sprang to life again. As this is said to have taken place at Sagar, where the Ganges joins the sea, about a lakh of people go there every year to bathe. The festival is called Dasahara, because bathing at this season is said to remove all the sins committed in ten births.

**The Holi or Dol Jatra.**—One would suppose that any Hindu with the slightest sense of decency, would wish to forget the conduct of Krishna with the Gopis; but, instead of that, it is commemorated by a great festival. The people go about in excited crowds, throwing red powder upon passers-by, and singing indecent songs. It is

almost impossible for a woman to walk through the streets without being insulted. All this is in the name of religion, and, as it has been remarked, "obscenity becomes the measure of piety."

**Pongal.**—This is the chief festival in South India, although apparently unknown in the north. It is a time of rejoicing, because the month Magha, every day of which is unfortunate, is about to expire, to be succeeded by a month every day of which is fortunate. On the first day near relations are invited to an entertainment. The second day is called the Surya Pongal. The principal ceremony is boiling milk. When it begins to simmer, all present at once cry out "Pongal"! which means boiling. This is the great day for visits. The salutation begins by the question, "Has the milk boiled?", to which the answer is, "It has boiled." The third day is called the Pongal of Cows. The men go round all the cows and oxen belonging to the house several times, sprinkling them with water, and the sashtangam is made before them four times. The cows and bullocks have their horns painted of different colours, and are allowed to wander about the whole day at their pleasure.

About fifty Hindu festivals might be enumerated. In fact there is scarcely a day of the year in which the Brahmans cannot make out a claim for offerings on some ground or other.

**Remarks on Hindu Festivals.**—At the principal temples every artifice is used to please a people who, like children, are fond of *tumashas*. The cars are finely decorated according to Hindu ideas; there are songs, dancing, fire-works and other amusements. But no advice is given to the worshippers with regard to moral conduct. So far from that, in the case of the Holi, wickedness is encouraged, and prostitutes drive a gainful trade.

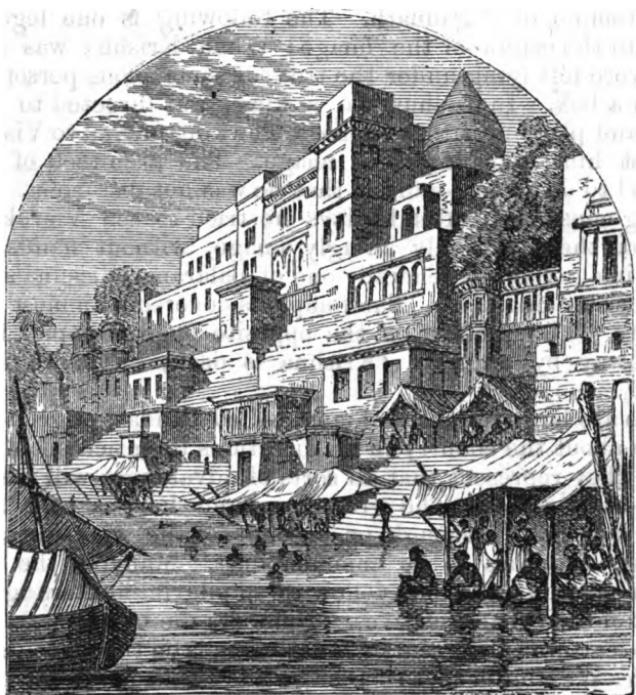
The Hindu festivals are intended to celebrate fictitious events, victories over Asuras and others which never took place. Truth requires that all of them should be abandoned. In their room, there should be regular meetings for worship and instruction, as will hereafter be explained.

#### PILGRIMAGES.

Pilgrimages form an important part of popular Hinduism. It is the earnest desire of most of the people, at least once in a lifetime, to visit one, if not more, of the supposed sacred places. Great numbers, who are regarded as the most holy of men, spend their whole lives in going about from shrine to shrine.

Only two of the principal places of pilgrimage can be noticed.

**Douares.**—Of all the holy places in India this is the most sacred. It is said to be placed on the prong of Siva's trident, and his worshippers wish to die there, believing that they will gain a sure entrance into heaven. Its sanctity is shown by the following story:



BENARES.

On one occasion Brahma and Siva quarrelled about their respective positions. As Brahma declared that he was supreme, Siva cut off Brahma's fifth head, and was thus guilty of the most heinous crime of injuring the progenitor of the Brahmins. The head of Brahma adhered to Siva's hand. To get rid of it, Siva practised the greatest austerities, and wandered from shrine to shrine ; but all was in vain till he reached Benares.

The sanctity of Benares extends from the Ganges, to the Panchkosi road. Whoever dies within this area, whether Hindu, Mussulman, or Christian, whether pure in heart and life or an outcast and murderer, is sure of the blessedness of heaven. Hence the usurper who has spent all his life in oppressing the poor or the man guilty of the foulest crimes, at the approach of death comes to Benares, comforted with the treacherous lie that his sins are forgiven him, and his soul is saved.

**Puri.**—Next to Benares, Puri is perhaps the most popular place of pilgrimage. The whole Province of Orissa is regarded as peculiarly holy, although the people are one of the most backward races in India.

Puri is a small town on the shore of the Bay of Bengal, noted

for its temple of Jagannath. The following is one legend with regard to the origin of the image: When Krishna was shot, his bones were left lying under the tree till some pious persons placed them in a box. Indradhumma, a king, was directed to form an image, and place in it these bones. The king prayed to Visvakarma to assist him in making the image. The architect of the gods promised to do so on condition that he was not disturbed. Though the king consented, after 15 days he tried to see Visvakarma at work, but there was only an ugly image, without hands or feet. By the image there is generally one of Balarama, Krishna's brother, and his sister Subhadra. The temple is covered with most indecent sculpture. The picture on the opposite page is copied from one taken away by pilgrims. Krishna is dark, Subhadra is in the middle.

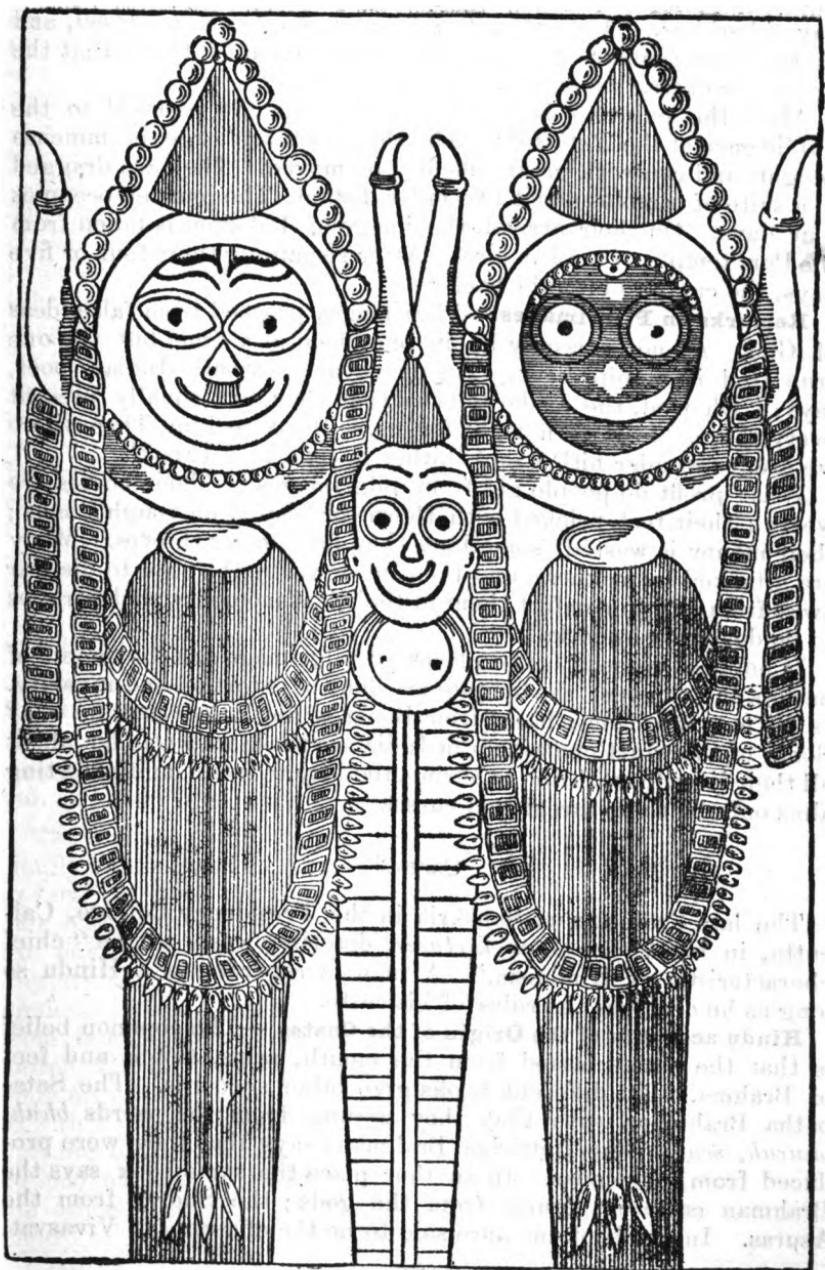
There are large numbers of men, called Pandas, pilgrim-hunters, who go about the country in all directions to entice people to visit Puri. They represent that all sorts of advantages will result from this meritorious act. The ground around Puri is said to be all strewn with gold, although, on account of the wickedness of the kali-yug, it appears to be common dust. Many of the pilgrims are women, who sometimes follow these pilgrim-hunters against the consent of their male relatives. Numbers die by the way. Skeletons lie scattered along the sides of the roads on the principal routes.

Sir W. W. Hunter says: "Disease and death make havoc of the pilgrims. During their stay in Puri they are badly lodged and miserably fed." Pilgrims are told that it is sinful for them to cook themselves. They must buy the food, *mahaprasad*, which has been presented to Jagannath. The price is dear, the cooking bad, and often it is so old as to be putrid. It is considered too sacred for the least fragment to be thrown away. Hence it is consumed by some one or other, whatever its state of putrefaction, to the very last morsel. It is dangerous even to a man of robust health, and deadly to way-worn pilgrims, many of whom reach Puri with some form or other of bowel complaint.\*

The two principal festivals at Puri are the *Snan Jatra* and the *Rath Jatra*.

The *Snan Jatra* is held to commemorate the day when the first image was commenced. It does no credit to the architect of the gods. The eyes of Jagannath are large and round, which, with his peaked nose, causes the face to look like that of an immense owl. The images are brought out and bathed with water from a well, after which they are dressed in beautiful robes. When the ceremonies are concluded, the images are taken to a small room called the sick chamber, where they remain for a fortnight, it being

\* Hunter's Orissa.



understood that fever resulted from their unusual exposure on the day of bathing. During this time the temple doors are closed, and there is no regular worship. The real reason of this is that the images are being repainted.

After the painting is complete, the idols are exposed to the public gaze at the *Rath Jatra*. The three cars are large, of immense weight, and can with great difficulty be moved. They are dragged to a suite of temples about two miles distant. The journey occupies four days. On their arrival, the image of Lakshmi is taken from the Puri temple to see her lord. After remaining there four or five days, the cars are brought back.\*

**Remarks on Pilgrimages.**—Pilgrimages proceed from false ideas of God. A man can only be in one place at a time, but the one true God is omnipresent. Tayumanavar, a South Indian poet, says : “ Oh God, the Veda tells us that thou art equally present everywhere. Is it then right for us, without seeking Thee where we are, to wander hither and thither in search of Thee ? ”

What profit do people get from pilgrimages ? Their bodies are weary ; their feet pricked with thorns or chafed on rough stones ; their money is wasted, sometimes they fall among thieves. Many are attacked by sickness, and then lie down by the road to die, far away from any to comfort them in their last moments, and perhaps to be devoured by jackals.

Is holiness gained ? The places of pilgrimage are the haunts of harlots and thieves : the temples are dens of extortion and rapacity. Is the man who comes back, from Benares, any better than he was ? Some of the worst characters in India are those who wander about all their lives from shrine to shrine, too lazy to work, and extorting alms only by their threatened curses.

#### CASTE.†

The late Professor of Sanskrit in the Presidency College, Calcutta, in his *Tagore Law Lectures*, describes caste as the “ chief characteristic of Hinduism.” A man is regarded as a Hindu so long as he observes the rules of his caste.

**Hindu accounts of the Origin of the Castes.**—The common belief is that the castes issued from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of Brahma. But different books give other accounts. The Sata-patha Brahmana says that they sprung from the words *bhuh*, *bhuwah*, *svah*. The Taittiriya Brahmana says that they were produced from the Vedas. In another place the same book says the Brahman caste is sprung from the gods ; the Sudra, from the Asuras. In one book men are said to be the offspring of Vivasvat,

\* Wilkins, *Modern Hinduism*, pp. 288, 289.

† Abridged from a “ Paper on Indian Reform.” See Catalogue at the end.

in another his son Manu is said to be their progenitor, whilst in a third they are said to be descended from a female of the same name. The Bhagavata Purana says that in the Satya Yuga there was but one caste. The Vayu Purana says that the separation into castes did not take place till the Treta Yuga.

Such contradictory statements cannot all be true. Discredit is thrown upon the whole of them.

**True Origin of Caste.**—Caste arose chiefly from three causes. The first was difference of race. The ordinary names for caste prove this. *Jati* means race; *varna*, colour. The Aryas, coming from a colder climate, were lighter in colour than the original inhabitants of India, whom they called “the black skin.” Difference of employment was another cause. In every civilized country there are priests, soldiers, merchants, and men following other occupations. Manu represents the castes to have multiplied by marriages between the four original castes. These mixed castes did not wait for mixed marriages before they came into existence. Professions, trades, and handicrafts had grown up without any reference to caste. Some castes, as the musicians called Venas, from *vina*, the lyre, got their name from their occupation. Difference of place was a third cause. Servants who waited on ladies were called Vaidehas, because they came from Videha. Subdivisions of caste arose from jealousy between rival families, difference in religion, &c.

Bhrigu, in the Santi-parva of the Mahabharata, thus accounts for the origin of the castes :—

There is no difference of castes : this world, having been at first created by Brahma entirely Brahmanic, became (afterwards) separated into castes in consequence of works.”

**The Laws of Caste according to Manu.**—The Brahman was at first simply an assistant at sacrifices. Afterwards he became a *purohita*, or family priest. There was a long struggle between the Brahmans and Kshatriyas for supremacy ; but at last the Brahmans carried the day. By degrees, after investing the caste system “with a sacred character in the eyes of the people, they expanded it into an immense spider’s web, which separated class from class, family from family, man from man, and which, while it rendered all united action impossible, enabled the watchful priests to pounce upon all who dared to disturb the threads of their social tissue and to wither them to death.”

Some of the privileges accorded to Brahmans by Manu are noticed at page 23 under “Living Men considered Divine.” On the other hand, the following are some of his Ordinances with regard to Sudras :—

“413. But a Sudra, whether bought or not bought, (the Brahman)

may compel to practise servitude ; for that (Sudra) was created by the Self-existent merely for the service of the Brahman.

417. A Brahman may take possession of the goods of a Sudra with perfect peace of mind, for, since nothing at all belongs to this (Sudra) as his own, he is one whose property may be taken away by his master. Book VIII.

125. The leavings of food should be given (him) and the old clothes ; so too the blighted part of the grain ; so too the old furniture. Book X.

270. If a (man) of one birth assault one of the twice-born castes with virulent words, he ought to have his tongue cut out, for he is of the lowest origin.

281. If a low-born man endeavours to sit down by the side of a high-born man, he should be banished after being branded on the hip, or (the king) may cause his backside to be cut off. Book VIII.

80. One may not give advice to a Sudra, nor (give him) the remains (of food) or (of) butter that has been offered. And one may not teach him the law or enjoin upon him (religious) observances.

81. For he who tells him the law and he who enjoins upon him (religious) observances, he indeed, together with that (Sudra), sinks into the darkness of the hell called Asamvrta (unbounded.) Book IV."

Let any one after reading the above say whether caste is founded on truth and justice. It is a system devised by cunning men to enslave their fellow-countrymen, and is based on a blasphemous falsehood. It "involves," says Principal Caird, "the worst of all wrongs to humanity—that of hallowing evil by the authority and sanction of religion."

**No Authority in the Vedas.**—Professor Max Müller first printed the whole of the Rig Veda with the commentary of Sayana ; and he has devoted nearly his whole life to its study under the most favourable circumstances. What does he say ?

"There is no authority whatever in the hymns of the Veda for the complicated system of castes. There is no law to prohibit the different classes of the people from living together, from eating and drinking together ; no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes ; no law to brand the offspring of such marriages with an indelible stigma. There is no law to sanction the blasphemous pretensions of a priesthood to divine honours, or the degradation of any human being to a state below the animal." *Chips.* Vol. II.

**Evils of Caste.**—An appeal to "*Young India*," by the late Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, contains the following :—

"Caste is an audacious and sacrilegious violation of God's law of human brotherhood. It makes civil distinctions inviolable divine institutions, and in the name of the Holy God sows perpetual discord and enmity among his children ! It exalts one section of the people above the rest, gives the former, under the seal of divine sanction, the monopoly of

education, religion and all the advantages of social pre-eminence, and vests them with the arbitrary authority of exercising a tyrannical sway over unfortunate and helpless millions of human souls, trampling them under their feet and holding them in a state of miserable servitude. It sets up the Brahminical order as the very vicegerents of the Deity, and stamps the mass of the population as a degraded and unclean race, unworthy of manhood and unfit for heaven."

## MISCELLANEOUS HINDU BELIEFS.

### THE PURANAS.

Popular Hinduism is largely based on the Puranas, of which there are said to be eighteen. Most are said to be Siva Puranas, others are Vaishnava Puranas, and two are Brahma Puranas. The Vishnu Purana is one of the most celebrated, and there is an English translation of it by Wilson, formerly the Oxford Professor of Sanskrit. The Purana, at the beginning, claims to be "equal in sanctity to the Vedas." The First Book concludes as follows :

"Thus, Brahman, has the first portion of this Purana been duly revealed to you : listening to which expiates all offences. The man who hears this Purana obtains the fruit of bathing in the Pushkara lake for 12 years in the month of Kartic. The gods bestow upon him who hears this work the dignity of a divine sage, of a patriarch, or of a spirit of heaven."

The Vishnu Purana professes to give an account of creation, of Narayana as a boar raising the earth, of the origin of the four castes from the mouth, breast, thighs, and feet of Brahma, and many other wonderful events which are said to have taken place millions of years ago. It also describes the geography of the earth and the nature of the heavenly bodies. Let the latter be examined to see how far they agree with the facts of the case.

**Puranic Geography.**—The Vishnu Purana (Book II, Chap. 2) says that the golden mountain Meru is in the centre of the earth. Its height is 84,000 yojanas ; its depth below the surface of the earth is 16,000 yojanas. Its diameter at the summit is 32,000 yojanas ; and at its base 16,000. Around Mount Meru are seven island continents, surrounded by the seven seas of salt water, of sugar-cane juice, of wine, clarified butter, of curds, of milk, and fresh water. There are four mountains as buttresses to Meru, each 10,000 yojanas in height. Each of them has a different kind of tree on its summit, 1,100 yojanas in height. From the Jambu tree the continent Jambudwipa derives its name. The apples of that tree are as large as elephants.

The depth of the earth below the surface is said to be 70,000

yojanas, each of the seven regions of Patalas extending downwards 10,000. Below the seven Patalas is the form of Vishnu, called Shesha, or Ananta. Shesha bears the entire world, like a diadem, upon his head, and he is the foundation on which the seven Patalas rest. When Ananta, his eyes rolling with intoxication, yawns, then the earth, with all its forests, mountains, seas, and rivers, trembles.

Every boy who has attended an English school knows that all the above statements are untrue. Thousands of ships have sailed round the earth, and its diameter is not more than about 8,000 miles. How could the Mount Meru, 16,000 yojanas in diameter at the base, stand on it and descend 16,000 yojanas below its surface? The earth does not rest on anything; it floats in the sky like the sun and moon.

**Puranic Astronomy.**—The sun is situated 100,000 yojanas from the earth, and the moon is an equal distance from the sun. The planet Budha (Mercury) is 2 lakhs of yojanas above the lunar mansions; Sukra (Venus) is at the same distance from Mercury. The chariot of the sun is 9,000 yojanas in length; it is drawn by seven horses. The chariot of the moon has three wheels, and is drawn by ten horses of the whiteness of jasmine. 36,333 deities drink the lunar ambrosia during the light half of the month, while the Pitris are nourished in the dark fortnight. Eight black horses draw the dusky chariot of Rahu, and eight horses of a red colour that of Ketu. The chariots of the nine planets are fastened to Dhruva, the Pole Star, by aerial cords.

Every one of the above statements is erroneous. Instead of the moon being twice the distance of the sun from the earth, it is only about 240,000 miles away, while the sun is about 91 millions of miles distant. The moon waxes and wanes—not from the gods drinking the ambrosia—but simply because we can see only the bright part of it on which the sun shines. Instead of eclipses being caused by the Asuras Rahu and Ketu, the sun is concealed by the moon crossing it in its course, while eclipses of the moon are caused by the shadow of the earth falling upon it.

When a witness tells us many things which we know to be false, we do not put confidence in any thing which he says. The statements in the Vishnu Purana about the golden egg, the churning of the ocean, Krishna lifting up the mountain Govardhana, &c., are just as fabulous as those about Mount Meru, Rahu, and Ketu.

**Contradictions of the Puranas.**—Each Purana claims the god whom it celebrates to be the greatest, and denounces all others.

The Bhagavata says:

“Those who are devoted to Bhava (Siva) and those who follow their doctrines are justly esteemed heretics, and enemies of the true Shastra. Those who desire final emancipation forsake the hideous lord of the devils,

and looking to Narayana, worship him with a mind at peace and free from envy."

On the other hand the Padma Purana says :—

" From even looking at Vishnu the wrath of Siva is kindled, and from his wrath we fall assuredly into a horrible hell; let not therefore the name of Vishnu ever be pronounced."

According to one Saiva account, Vishnu, on a certain occasion, took the form of a bull, and obtained as a favour from the lord of Kailasa, to be accepted as his vehicle in that form.

Even with regard to the origin of the gods the statements are most contradictory. As already mentioned, the Bhagavata Purana affirms that Brahma sprung from a lotus on the navel of Vishnu ; the Matsya Purana asserts that Siva was created by Brahma. The Linga Purana, on the other hand, declares that Brahma, Vishnu and their wives were produced by Siva.

The above are only a few specimens. The saying of the Mahabharata is true :—

" Contradictory are the Vedas ; contradictory are the Shastras; contradictory are the doctrines of the holy sages."

**Remarks on the Puranas.**—Before Europeans describe any countries, they visit them, measure them carefully, and then prepare accounts. Philosophers examine the stars night after night by telescopes, and spend years in the inquiry. The writers of the Puranas sat in their houses, and described the world and the heavens out of their own heads. The object in each case was to excite the greatest wonder, that the Purana might be admired; and the god whom it celebrates, be esteemed as supreme. Nothing seems worthy of being stated unless it has incredible magnitude to recommend it. When time is calculated, there are millions and hundreds of millions of years. When armies and battles are described there must be introduced millions of soldiers and elephants. The more anything is beyond the truth, the more unquestioning the credulity with which it is received. Any person of ordinary intelligence will reject the Puranas for their extravagance. The stories are fit only to amuse children.

The First Book of the Vishnu Purana gives its origin as follows : " I will relate you that which was originally imparted by the great father of all (Brahma), in answer to the questions of Daksha and other venerable sages, and repeated by them to Purukutsa, a king who reigned on the banks of the Narmada. It was next related by him to Saraswata, and by Saraswata to me." The author forgot what he had written : in the last book, he says that it was communicated to him by Vasishtha.

Both this account of its origin, and the benefits alleged to be obtained by hearing it read, must be discredited.

The Puranas are of some interest as illustrating the beliefs of the Hindus, their manners and customs when they were written. A few grains of truth regarding history and geography may perhaps be extracted from them; but as sacred books they are no more worthy of belief than the "Tales of the Arabian Nights."

**The Tantras.**—The Vamacharis give these as the authority for their orgies. They are so little known that no proper account can be given of them. But the remarks on the Puranas are sufficient. The Tantras occupy a still lower place.

#### TRANSMIGRATION.

It is the belief of the Hindus that the soul is eternal, and that it passes through innumerable births until at last it is absorbed into Brahma. A South Indian poet thus expresses his feelings at the prospect:—

" How many births are past, I cannot tell ;  
How many yet to come, no man can say ;  
But this alone I know, and know full well,  
That pain and grief embitter all the way."

The alternate happiness and misery of life are thus described :—

" The being who is still subject to birth may at one time sport in the beautiful garden of a heavenly world, and at another be cut to a thousand pieces in hell ; at one time he may be one of the highest gods and at another a degraded outcast ; at one time he may feed on ambrosia and at another he may have molten lead poured down his throat. Alternately he may repose on a couch with the gods and writhe on a bed of red hot iron ; become wild with pleasure and then mad with pain ; sit on the throne of the gods and then be impaled with hungry dogs around."

Hence the dread of continued transmigration is the one haunting thought with the Hindus. The great aim is, not to find truth or to be released from the burden of sin, but how to break this iron chain of repeated existences, how to return to complete absorption into pure unconscious spirit.

Transmigration is supposed to explain why some are born rich, others poor ; some healthy, others diseased, &c. All in this life, its feelings and actions, its joys and sorrows, its good and evil deeds, like fruit from a seed, are supposed to be the necessary result of actions performed in a former state of being. If a babe agonize in pain, the Hindu says, " It is the fruit of a former birth."

When asked for a proof of this doctrine, the usual reply is that the Shastras teach it. It has been shown that the Shastras

teach false geography, false astronomy, and give the most contradictory account of many things. Some better evidence is therefore required.

On the other hand, there are several arguments showing that transmigration cannot be true.

1. *Like always produces like.*—Every animal, every plant produces animals and plants exactly like itself. According to transmigration, a man in his next birth may be a lion, a pig, an insect or a pumpkin. The analogy of nature is a strong presumption against its truth.

2. *No one has the slightest recollection of any previous birth.*—It is the same soul that transmigrates. A traveller who journeys from city to city remembers his native place from which he started, the relations he left there; he recollects, too, the different cities through which he passed, and what happened to himself in each. The body, we are told, is the "city of Brahma," and the soul as it enters new "cities" ought to carry with it a complete recollection of its past history. But no soul remembers anything that happened to it previous to its present life. The proof then is almost perfect that it never lived before.

3. *By transmigration persons virtually become new beings, so that they are in reality punished for the actions of others.*—It is said that at every new birth something takes place by which the remembrance of former things is destroyed. In this case the person on whom it is wrought is no longer the same person. The object of transmigration is to purify the soul by lessons of warning from its past history. This is lost when a person knows not what he did and why he is punished. Suppose a magistrate said to a peon, "Bring in that man and give him 50 lashes;" would not the man ask, "Why am I flogged?" What would be thought of such a magistrate? According to transmigration, one man is really punished for the faults of another of which he is quite ignorant.

4. *Instead of men being purified by Transmigration, they become worse.*—"One of the objects of transmigration is the purification of souls." The means proposed are fitted to produce the opposite results. The soul, if made to occupy a brute, will become brutish; if made to occupy a devil, it will become devilish. Do we cleanse the filthy by dragging them through the miry clay of ten thousand tanks? They would thereby become only the more filthy.

This world is looked upon as a state of rewards and punishments. It is generally supposed that a king is happy and a poor man miserable. Often the reverse is the case. There is much less inequality in the condition of men than people think. A king gets accustomed to rich food, and feels no more pleasure in eating it than a poor man when taking his dinner. The sleep of the poor man is

sweet ; the nights of the great are often troubled. Shakespeare says,

“ Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

Kings are liable to be assassinated. They are tempted to many sins. An Indian proverb says, “ The fruit of a kingdom is hell.” Where is the blessing of a kingdom if such is its result ?

Much of the misery in the world is brought upon people by their own misconduct. The suffering caused in such ways is a warning to them to reform.

According to transmigration, the Hindu looks upon the blessings of this life as rewards for meritorious acts in some former state of existence. They are the payment of a just debt, for which no gratitude is due to God. If a man meets with misfortunes, he does not impute them to present misdeeds, for which he should repent, but to some sins in a former birth.

The world is not a place where we are rewarded or punished for sins in imaginary former births ; but one where our conduct is tried. We are like the servants of a great king who has allotted to us different duties, and according as we discharge them we shall be dealt with. People are tested in different ways,—some by riches, some by poverty, some by health, some by sickness, some by prosperity, some by adversity. Happiness or misery depends far more upon ourselves than upon outward things. Those who truly love and serve God may always be happy, and can meet even death with joy as a messenger calling them to their Father’s house, there to dwell for ever. They have no dread, like Hindus, of unknown future births.

#### BELIEF IN THE POWER OF MANTRAS, AUSTERITIES, CURSES, ASTROLOGY, OMENS, AND THE EVIL EYE.

The Emperor of Russia is one of the most powerful and richest monarchs in the world, but he is in constant fear of his life. Armed soldiers have to watch him day and night ; even when he travels by rail, sentries have to be stationed at short distances all along the line.

The Hindus, from childhood to their dying day, are kept in somewhat similar dread. There are no persons seeking to shoot them or blow up their houses with gunpowder ; but they suppose that there are numbers of demons constantly surrounding them, lurking in the rocks, trees, and jungles seeking to do them harm. They think that there are goddesses, like Sitala Devi and Mari-amman, requiring to be propitiated. They dare not do certain things because the planets are supposed to be unfavourable ; their fields

and fruit trees may be blasted by the evil eye ; the howling of a dog or the sight of an empty pot may make them miserable for a whole day. No man is without enemies whom he suspects to be seeking to injure him by charms.

There is this great difference between the Emperor of Russia and the Hindus ;—that the dangers from which the former has to guard against are real, while the latter are terrified by imaginary evils. The Hindus have forsaken the worship of the one true God, and they are therefore tormented by numberless false fears.

**Mantras.**—One way in which Brahmins frighten the people and make them obedient is by assertions regarding the power of *Mantras*. Sir Monier Williams thus describes the claims of a *Mantra-sastri* :—

" He can prognosticate futurity, work the most startling prodigies, infuse breath into dead bodies, kill or humiliate enemies, afflict any one anywhere with disease or madness, inspire any one with love, charm weapons and give them unerring efficacy, enchant armour and make it impenetrable, turn milk into wine, plants into meat. He is even superior to the gods, and can make gods, goddesses, imps, and demons, carry out his most trifling behests. Hence it is not surprising that the following saying is everywhere current in India :—‘The whole universe is subject to the gods ; the gods are subject to the Mantras ; the Mantras to the Brahmins ; therefore the Brahmins are our gods.’"

Some charms are supposed to preserve life ; others to destroy life. The same belief prevails very much among the uncivilised negroes of Western Africa. In some cases their bodies are almost covered with charms. There are people in Ceylon so ignorant that they employ only charms to cure sickness—not medicine. Persons a little less ignorant employ both.

It has been shown again and again that mantras or charms are worthless. A reward of Rs. 50 is offered to any *mantra-sastri* who will kill a fly by means of his mantras without the use of poison.

While the wearing of a charm does no good, it does great harm. It shows that the person on whom it is tied has forsaken the true God, and sought protection from some evil being.

**Austerities.**—The Hindus have unbounded belief in the power of austerities. One proverb is, "The fruit of austerities is a kingdom." A man is born a king in consequence of austerities which he practised in a previous birth. But Hindu books abound with stories showing results far more wonderful. Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon, attained his vast power through austerities. The gods themselves owe their position to the same cause, and they are sometimes in terror, lest men, by still greater austerities, should supplant them.

The whole idea rests on a false foundation. Hindus believe in fate, but there is no such thing. The one true God is the supreme

Ruler of all things. He gave us our bodies, wonderfully made, as well as our souls. It is our duty to take care of His gifts. So far from pleasing Him by sitting between blazing fires, by holding up our arm till it becomes useless, or by self-murder, we incur His displeasure.

Suppose a kind friend offered us gifts, and we refused to accept them, would he not be offended? God has supplied every thing in the world necessary for the comfort and happiness of man; the proud ascetic rejects these gifts with contempt, and, as it were, casts them in the face of the giver. As though he were his own Creator and Lord, he lays violent hands upon a life which he neither gave nor can restore.

God has implanted within us a desire to preserve our life. What He requires us to do is, not to make our bodies the instruments of sin. We should be like temples in which a holy God dwells, avoiding every evil desire or passion which would be displeasing to Him.

**Curses.**—Other nations suppose wise and good men to be calm under provocation, and willing to return good for evil. On the contrary, the Hindu sacred books make their Rishis notorious for irritable tempers, and for their habit of cursing any who did them the slightest injury. An example has been mentioned. When Krishna was entertaining Durvas he cursed him, because he did not remove a grain of rice which accidentally fell on his foot. The power of a curse is supposed to be terrific. Vishnu, one of the highest gods, in consequence of the curse of Bhrigu, had to undergo seven births among mortals.

The lazy men who wander about as pilgrims extort alms from the people by threatening to curse them.

Curses are just like mantras. The Bible says, "The curse causeless shall not come." Curses have been well compared to ashes thrown up into the air, which fall down upon the heads of those who flung them. They only injure those by whom they are uttered.

Any man of intelligence can see that the stories told of Durvas, Bhrigu, and others are mere inventions to frighten the ignorant.

**Astrology.**—In this country nothing of any importance is done without consulting an astrologer. When a woman is pregnant, the astrologer is sent for to say whether it will be a male or female child; what sort of child it will be; how long it will live, &c. When a man wishes to have his son or daughter married, the astrologer is the only true counsellor and guide. Does a merchant wish to speculate, is a man about to undertake a journey, to dig a well, to build a house; the astrologer must fix the lucky day and hour.

The belief in astrology arose in the following way. In the "childhood of the world," the planets were considered powerful gods, regulating human affairs. By means of the telescope we know that

they are simply lifeless bodies like our earth. The world on which we live is a planet. Would any king appoint stones as his ministers? Can we suppose the all-wise God to be guilty of such folly?

Compare the different nations—those that are guided by astrologers and those that are guided by reason. Look at a Hindu Almanac. It is filled with directions about lucky and unlucky days and hours. Look, on the other hand, at an English Almanac. From beginning to end, there is not a single word about lucky or unlucky times.

Long ago, the English, like the Hindus, believed in astrology. They were then comparatively poor. Wise men found out by careful examination that horoscopes, written by the best astrologers, were only right now and then by chance; the true nature of the planets came by degrees to be understood. Are not the English who have no astrologers richer and more prosperous than the Hindus who are guided by them?

Space does not permit the subject to be fully treated. The reader is recommended to consult the able *Notes on Hindu Astrology* by Raja Sir T. Madava Row. There is also a smaller work, *Astronomy and Astrology*.\* The belief is as false as it is mischievous.

**Omens.**—Instead of using the reason which God has given them, Hindus are largely guided by omens.

The lizard bears a high reputation as a guide. An Indian treatise on divination says that if a lizard fall on the head, it prognosticates death; if on the right ear, good; on the left ear, evil; on the nose, disease; on the neck, joy, &c. Its chirp is also a certain sign. There is, however, a Tamil proverb, "The lizard which was the oracle of the whole village has fallen into the broth pot."

The ass likewise appropriately holds a place. If an ass bray in the east, success will be delayed; in the south-east, it forebodes death; in the south, it denotes gain of money; in the south-west, good news; in the west, disturbance, &c.

Through being guided by omens, favourable times for going on a journey or commencing an undertaking are often lost, and failure is the result.

Omens are childish superstitions. There is not the slightest connexion between meeting a horse or a Brahman and the good success or bad success of any business. A lizard is not a prophet to foretell future events. Can we suppose that God makes known to a dog, a creature without a soul and without reason, what He does not reveal to the wisest men? If the plaintiff and defendant

\* Price 1 anna. also a Pice Paper on *Astrology*. Both may be obtained from Mr. A. T. Scott, Tract Depot, Madras. Postage  $\frac{1}{2}$  anna extra.

in a suit went to court together, they would meet the same omens, yet one would lose and the other gain the case.

**The Evil Eye.**—The fear of the “Evil Eye” (drishti dosha) is another superstition widely prevalent. Even a look of admiration from friend or foe is believed to be fraught with great danger and possibly serious calamity to any individual who is the object of it. In gardens an old pot, spotted with chunam, is sometimes put up to catch the evil eye, and take off its influence from the vegetables. Stories are told about the supposed effects of such looks.

All this is nonsense. Evil eyes have no effect whatever. It is an ignorant, groundless belief. The fields in England produce some of the richest crops in the world, but not in one of them can a pot be seen. Even in this country intelligent people do not follow such a foolish custom, while their gardens bear equally well.

The way to be delivered from all those false fears is to trust in the one living and true God. Prayer to Him is the only mantra. Confiding in His protection, we are safe both for this world and the next. No evil can happen to us without His knowledge. Affliction may indeed, befall us, but He will make it work for our good in the end.

#### EXAMINATION OF SOME HINDU SAYINGS.

There are various proverbs constantly in the mouths of Hindus, by which they seek to justify their conduct. A South India poet says, “All lights are not lights.” There are false proverbs as well as true ones. It is our duty to inquire whether the rules we observe for our guidance in life will stand the test of inquiry. A few of the most popular will now be considered.

##### 1. “We must walk according to custom.”

Sheep, bullocks, and other animals, must walk according to custom; but God has given man reason, so that he can judge for himself whether a custom is right or wrong, good or bad. If a man simply acts like the beasts, in exchange for the reason he throws aside, he ought to be furnished with an extra pair of legs, a couple of horns and a long tail!

Hindus follow the above rule only when it suits their pleasure. In many things they do not walk according to custom. They engage in any thing, though contrary to the usages of their fore-fathers, by which they may gain some advantage. To get a light, instead of using a flint and steel, they employ lucifer matches. Their ancestors journeyed on foot or rode on horses, &c.; Hindus now travel by rail instead of walking according to custom. None of their ancestors learned English; it is now studied by lakhs in the hope of obtaining good employment.

The insufficiency of this excuse for wrong-doing may easily be shown.

A thief was caught stealing and put in prison. A kind gentleman who saw him there, said : " You should give up stealing and learn some honest trade." The robber answered, " What you say is quite right ; but, ' we must walk according to custom.' I belong to the thief caste, and my ancestors got their living by robbery." Thugs first murdered their victims, and then robbed them. One of them, when on his trial, said : " I and my fathers have been Thugs for twenty generations."

If a man were robbed by one of the thief caste or had his son murdered by a Thug, would he think them innocent because they said, " we must walk according to custom ?" Would a magistrate accept such an excuse ? So when men stand before God, the upright Judge, to account for their actions, He will not take as a sufficient reason for breaking His commands, that they " walked according to custom."

If a custom is good, we ought to follow it ; if bad, it ought to be given up, whatever others may do.

## 2. " Every one should follow his own Religion."

The Chinese use the word " Joss " for religion. When a Chinaman wishes to be friendly with a European, he will say, " My Joss ; your Joss. My Joss for me, your Joss for you ; all very good Joss." The same idea is found in India. A Hindu may admit that Christianity is true and good for Europeans while at the same time he thinks that his own religion is best for him.

The Bhagavad Gita says, " One's own religion, though worthless, is better than the religion of another however well instituted." Is this correct ? There are a great many false religions in the world, some of them enjoining most wicked practices. The Vamacharis commit nameless abominations ; many nations offer human sacrifices —all in the name of religion. According to the above maxim, religions—however false and however wicked their rites—should not be given up by those who hold them.

In such things as clothing, food, manners, and customs, nations may often differ with advantage. The same dress is not suitable both for a cold and a hot climate. But there are other points on which they should all agree.

The Rev E. P. Rice, B.A., says :—

" There are facts the truth of which cannot in the nature of things vary in different nations of the world. If true at all, they are true everywhere and for ever. Take the facts of geography or astronomy. There cannot be such a thing as national geography. The earth is either round or flat, whichever may be proved to be the case. The fact when proved must be accepted in all parts of the globe. There is no distinctly

Hindu or English or Chinese geography. Geography is geography all the world over. And so of astronomy, and so of history. I go further and say that to this same realm of universal truths belongs Religion. It is obvious that true religion is not a manufactured article which men can make in different ways according to their liking. There are not different Creators for the different nations of the world any more than there are different suns in the sky. The same God and Father rules over all, loves and pities all, and judges all by one impartial code, and there can be no contradiction in the laws which He gives for the guidance of His children. Duties towards God do not vary according to our clime any more than duties towards man. . . . It is no more part of a patriot's duty to maintain a religion because it is the religion of his fathers than to maintain a conception of geography because it was the conception of his fathers. There is no nationality in Science or Religion. Englishman and Frenchman, German, Russian and Hindu ought to be at one in their aims in this sphere, viz., to know what is true and to practise what is noble.”\*

The reason we belong to any religion should be, because, after careful inquiry, we are convinced of its truth. The idea that one religion is good for one nation, and an opposite one for another nation is altogether wrong.

We are no more at liberty to adopt any religion we please than a subject to renounce his allegiance to his lawful sovereign, and set up another king. The sin and danger of worshipping any other than the one true God have already been shewn.

### **3. “Different Religions are Roads leading to the same City.”**

This means that all religions lead their followers to heaven. The folly of this can be seen by applying it to common life.

At Allahabad, several lines of railway meet. One line goes eastward to Calcutta; another northward towards Oudh, a third westward to Agra; a fourth southward to Jabalpur. Suppose a traveller were in doubt which line to take, and some one said to him, “Go into any train; all are roads leading to the same city,” what would he think of his reasoning?

It is just as false to say that all religions lead to heaven. It has been shown how contradictory they are to each other. If one be right the others must be wrong. Only the true religion leads to heaven; also religions lead to hell.

A sensible traveller, in a place like Allahabad, with several lines of railways, before going into a train, makes inquiries. We should act in the same manner with regard to religion.

### **4. “Whatever is written on our Heads will come to Pass.”**

The skull requires to be very strong to protect the brain. For this purpose, it is formed of different bones, which interlace

\* Patriotism. *The Harvest Field*, Sept. 1887.

each other. 'The joinings can be seen in a child's head or in a skull. The ignorant think that the joinings look like letters, and call them the writing of Brahma, showing the fate of the person.'

According to this saying, people cannot act otherwise than they do. God causes everything to be done. The blame of bad actions rests with him—not with the doer.

Persons who make the above excuse for their evil deeds do not actually believe it. Why do they shut their doors at night? If it is their fate that thieves will rob them, they cannot prevent it by being awake or having the door shut. If they are ill, why do they send for a doctor? If it is written on their head that they will recover, they will do so without any medicine. If a man in the street sees a carriage driving after him, does he stand still, saying, "If death is not written in my fate I shall not die though the carriage pass over my body?" If an enemy set fire to their house, do they say that it was his fate, and that he ought not to be punished?

In worldly matters the Hindus generally act like wise men, whereas in religion their conduct is often just the opposite.

People make the excuse that they must do according to what is written on their heads for two reasons

1. *To avoid doing what they dislike.*—Most men are careless about religion, and unwilling to give up the sins which they love. When urged to seek the salvation of their souls and to lead holy lives, they plead that what is written must happen, as a reason for doing nothing.

2. *To lay the blame on God.*—It is a very common thing for thief to try to shield himself by accusing an innocent person of the offence. Suppose a robber and murderer charge the best and kindest man in the city with his crime, he would only increase his guilt.

Of all beings in the universe, God is the purest. He hates sin with a perfect hatred, and forbids it under the severest penalties. For men to lay the blame of their evil deeds upon God, is a sin of the deepest dye.

It is objected that when men sin they use the faculties which God has given them, and that therefore He is responsible. Take a similar case. A master gives money to a servant to buy articles for the family. Instead of using it for that purpose, he spends it on drink, gambling, and prostitutes. Would it be an excuse for him to say, "Master, I am not to blame; you gave me the money." God gave us life, reason and other gifts to be spent in His service and in doing good to our fellowmen; but if we misuse them, the guilt rest with ourselves.

It may be said, why does God not keep men from sinning? A machine, like a watch, can act only as it is moved. It can neither do right nor wrong. If a thief were put into a room

full of jewels, but chained so that he could not touch one of them, it would be no merit on his part that he did not steal. God has made us free agents, able to do right or wrong, and He will reward or punish us accordingly. But there is no such writing on our heads as many people say, and they greatly increase their guilt by falsely trying to lay the blame on God.

Many Hindus when asked, "Who speaks within us?" will answer "God." Ask them, "Who tells lies?" Some will unblushingly accuse, "God;" but people generally will say, "No! God is no liar! we are the liars." So we are the sinners—not God.

### 5. "Where there is Faith, there is God."

This means that a man receives simply according to his faith. This saying is considered sufficient, and saves the trouble of all inquiry as to the real value of the object of faith. Let it be examined.

A man's faith may arise from ignorance as well as from knowledge. If a man believes that jewels are gold while they are only brass, will his faith have any effect? If a man intrust his property to a thief believing him to be an honest man, will his faith save his money? If a man take a cooly to be the king, will he be really such? If a man, wishing to cross a deep and rapid river, goes into a leaky boat saying that faith is the chief thing, will this save him from being drowned?

In like manner, if a man worship an idol believing it to be God, will his faith make it God? If a man believes that bathing in the Ganges will wash away his sins, he believes what is untrue and his sin remains.

In worldly matters men are not such fools as to believe that faith is sufficient. A banker does not say this when asked for the loan of money, nor a father when the marriage of his daughter is proposed. Faith placed on a false object is worthless, and simply ruins the man who trusts to it. Our first inquiry should therefore be, Is our faith placed on a proper object?

### 6. "God is Pervasive."

It is thought that because God is everywhere, any object may be worshipped as God.

By day, light is everywhere, but light is not the sun. God is everywhere, but everything is not God. We ought not to worship as God that which is not God.

God and the universe are quite distinct. The great Creator is to be worshipped—not the objects He has made.

If because God is everywhere anything may be worshipped, then, like the negroes of Western Africa, we may make a god of an eggshell, a broken pot, an old shoe, &c. Hindus say that there are 38 crores of divinities; but if every object in nature may be worshipped, the number of deities must be countless.

It is plain that the reasoning based on this saying is incorrect.

**7. "All the gods are the same though worshipped under different names."**

Take the three principal gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva : their residences, wives, and children are all different. Brahma is said to live in Satya-loka, his wife is Savitri ; Vishnu lives in Vaikuntha, his wife is Lakshmi ; Siva lives in Kailasa, his wife is said to be Parvati. Different dispositions and actions are ascribed to these gods. Several times they are sought to have fought with each other.

If the 33 crores of the Hindu gods are all the same, it may as well be said that the 28 crores of people in India with different houses, wives, children, occupations, are all one. If the gods are one, why are they reckoned as amounting to 33 crores ?

This is only an excuse for the folly of polytheism put forward by those who are somewhat more intelligent than the masses. Rammohun Roy says : "The Hindus firmly believe in the real existence of innumerable gods and goddesses who possess in their own departments full and independent powers, and to propitiate them, and not the true God, are temples erected and ceremonies performed."

Bishop Caldwell says : "The Hindus themselves call their religions by the name of the particular deity they worship, as *Siva Bhakti*, *Vishnu Bhakti*, &c. The vast majority would be indignant at the supposition that their own religions, and the detested heresy of their opponents are, after all, the same."

**8. "The gods can do as they please."**

The conscience of the Hindu has been so deadened and perverted that in some cases, like the Thugs, they commit robbery and murder in the name of religion. Still, the people generally know that quarrelling, lying, theft, drunkenness, adultery and murder are wrong. When asked why such actions are attributed to some of their chief gods, the excuse made, is *Samarthi ko dosh nahin*, The mighty can do what they please without committing sin.

The idea is taken from a Hindu despot, who could do anything he liked, as take the wives of his subjects or put them to death without trial, no one daring to find fault. This was the usual character of their sovereigns, and when the Hindus manufactured gods they took them as a model. Their gods are deified men.

Sir Alfred Lyall, in *The Fortnightly*, says of the Hindus :—

" Among most of those millions the religious conception has not yet reached that particular stage at which one object of divine Government is understood to be the advancement of morals. On the other hand, there is a considerable minority whose ideas have passed beyond this

stage, and who conceive their Divinity as supremely indifferent to all things, material as well as moral."

"The gods in no ways admit themselves to be bound by human views of morality, while the functions of popular religion very much resemble, in their highest range, the functions of a modern government; its business is confined to procuring material blessings, warding off evil, contending against such physical calamities as famine or pestilence, and codifying rules of social utility which have been verified by experience... So long as the gods do not bring more tremendous misfortune upon the country they need not be particularly moral; their speciality not being the direction of morals, as in later faiths, but the distribution of temporal blessings and curses."\*

The principle that the gods are not to be condemned for wrong-doing is the opposite of the truth. If a child commit a fault, he is blamed; if an ordinary man do the same, his guilt is greater; if a king does it, the guilt and evil consequences would be still greater. Krishna himself says in the Bhagavad Gita: "Whatever the most excellent practise, other men practise likewise; the world follows whatever example they set." Krishna's own example, as related in the Bhagavat Purana, has had a most pernicious effect upon his worshippers.

To say that the gods committed sin "in sport" or as a "divine amusement" only makes matters worse. Such an idea is blasphemous.

The foregoing examination shows that some of the proverbs current among the Hindus are false in principle, and can only mislead those who follow them. The Hindus apply them merely to religion, whereas, in ordinary life, they see their folly. No one is such an idiot as to say in business, "faith is sufficient."

### EFFECTS OF HINDUISM.

Only a few remarks can be made under this head.

1. **Poverty.**—Hindus are forbidden by caste to leave India, and thus they cannot acquire the wealth which may be obtained in other parts of the world. Manufactures are discouraged by making some of the most useful employments degrading.

2. **Intellectual Stagnation and Imbecility.**—The people of India are naturally intelligent, but they remained stationary in civilization for centuries. Their intellect has in some respects been dwarfed into childhood, which delights only in the marvellous and monstrous. The greatest self-contradictions, the wildest tales, do not awake their common sense.

It seems incredible to a European that a person of the slightest

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\* *Asiatic Studies*, pp. 59, 62.

intelligence can believe the stories in the Puranas ; but it is a fact that learned men and philosophers accepted them equally with the vulgar. Visvanatha Panchanana, one of the great doctors of the Nyaya philosophy, begins the *Bhāsha Parichchhada*, the text-book of Muktavali, with the following description of God : " Salutation to that Krishna, whose appearance is like a new cloud, the stealer of the clothes of the young Gopis, who is the seed of the tree of the universe."

Another evidence of intellectual weakness has already been noticed. The Hindus are largely guided by custom, not by reason : they follow each other like the lower animals.

Why are the people of India intensely conservative and the Anglo-Saxons so characteristically progressive ? The difference does not lie in the constitution of the races, but in the religious principles which the one accepts as true and which the other rejects as false.

**3. Hostility to Social Reform.**—The leading social evils under which India is suffering are the neglect of female education, early marriages, the treatment of widows, and the enormous expenses of caste feasts. Hinduism lies at the root of them all, and is the great obstacle to progress.

Pandits, steeped in Hinduism, are, as a rule, the greatest opponents of social reform. *The Hindu* quotes the following :—

"Three to four hundred Native Pandits of Bengal met at Calcutta on the 17th instant and passed resolutions in favour of child marriages as they exist at present." Sept. 26th, 1887.

**4. Loss of Individual Liberty.**—The Hindu is bound, hand and foot, by caste, "the most intolerant and exacting taskmaster that ever placed a yoke on the neck of man." The most minute rules have been framed to regulate the lives of its slaves. It interferes with all the events of life, and even with what is supposed to precede and follow life.

**5. Hindrance to the growth of Nationality.**—Hinduism, through caste, splits up the people into numerous sections, supposed to be as distinct as horses and asses. "National Congresses" would be impossible under Manu's caste rules. If Sudras presumed to sit in the presence of the "twice-born," banishment or mutilation would be the reward of their presumption.

**6. A few are puffed up with pride while nearly the whole human race is degraded, and some are ranked beneath the brutes.—**The world contains about 140 crores of inhabitants. The number of the "twice-born" is less than one crore ; 139 crores are Sudras or impure Mlechchas. When Sir Monier Williams, the Oxford Professor of Sanskrit, visited India, he found that the pandits who came to see him bathed afterwards to remove the pollution they had thus contracted.

True religion makes all men equal in the sight of God, notwithstanding earthly distinctions; but Hinduism, "instead of breaking down artificial barriers, waging war with false separations, softening divisions and undermining class hatred and anti-pathies, becomes itself the very consecration of them."

**7. Religion is concentrated on outward ceremony.**—The temple worship of Hinduism has been well characterised as "child's play." The mere repetition of the names of its gods, listening to its sacred books, or the sight of its *tirthas*, are supposed to secure heaven.

"The rigid observance of caste," says Rammohun Roy "is considered in so high a light as to compensate for every moral defect. Even the most atrocious crimes weigh little or nothing in the balance against the supposed guilt of its violation. Murder, theft, perjury, though brought home to the party by a judicial sentence, so far from inducing a loss of caste, is visited with no peculiar mark of infamy or disgrace."

On the other hand, the Great Teacher says that a man is defiled, not by what he eats, but by evil thoughts, adulteries, and murders.

**8. Religion and Morality are divorced.**—Bishop Caldwell says:—

"The duties of life are never inculcated in any Hindu temple. The discharge of those duties is never represented as enjoined by the gods, nor are any prayers ever offered in any temple for help to enable the worshippers to discharge those duties aright . . . Hence we often see religion going in the one direction and morality in another. We meet with a moral Hindu who has broken altogether away from religion; and what is still more common, yet still more extraordinary, we meet with a devout Hindu who lives a flagrantly immoral life. In the latter case, no person sees any inconsistency between the immorality and the devoutness."

Some time ago there was a great Sadhu at Akulkote, so holy that he could eat beef and drink brandy without in the least impairing his sanctity. According to Hinduism, when a man can say *Aham Brahman*, "I am God," to him there is neither good nor evil: he may act as he pleases. Tulsidas, a famous poet in North India, says: "I salute every thing good, and I salute every thing evil."

Buddhism has been described as "Morality without God," so Hinduism may be characterised as "God without Morality."

**9. The Means prescribed for deliverance from Sin and the attainment of Holiness are worthless.**—Bathing in the Ganges or other supposed sacred rivers or tanks, offerings to temples or Brahmins, rubbing ashes on the forehead, &c., are of no avail.

**10. Hinduism is rebellion against the one true God, the Creator**

**and rightful Lord of the Universe, and gives the honor due to Him to numberless imaginary gods, goddesses, demons, animals, and inanimate objects.**—The great sin of idolatry has already been noticed. So also has been the assimilating influence of worship, *yatha dewah, tatha bhaktah*, As is the god so is the worshipper.

### DUTY WITH REGARD TO POPULAR HINDUISM.

An appeal to "Young India" thus points out the duty of educated men with regard to idolatry :—

"There can be no doubt that the root of all the evils which afflict Hindu society, that which constitutes the chief cause of its degradation is idolatry. Idolatry is the curse of Hindustan, the deadly canker that has eaten into the vitals of native society. It would be an insult to your superior education to say that you have faith in idolatry, that you still cherish in your hearts reverence for the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, or that you believe in the thousand and one absurdities of your ancestral creed. But however repugnant to your understanding and repulsive to your good sense the idolatry of your forefathers may be, there is not a thorough appreciation of its deadly character, on moral grounds. It will not do to retain in the mind a speculative and passive disbelief in its dogmas : you must practically break with it as a dangerous sin and an abomination ; you must give it up altogether as an unclean thing. You must discomfit it, discourage it, oppose it and hunt it out of your country.

"For the sake of your souls and for the sake of the souls of the millions of your countrymen, come away from hateful idolatry, and acknowledge the one supreme and true God, our Maker, Preserver, and Moral Governor, not in belief only, but in the every-day concerns and avocations of your life. By offerings such uncompromising allegiance to Him and dedicating yourselves wholly to his service you will rescue your own consciences from corruption and sin, and your country from superstition, priesthood, absurd rites, injurious practices and horrid customs and usages. By declaring a vigorous crusade against Hinduism you will lay the axe at the root of the tree of corruption."

### SUGGESTED REFORMS.

It has been shown that the most intelligent Hindus admit that religious reform is needed. Some of the steps which ought to be taken in this direction will now be mentioned. Each ought to be considered separately, and an impartial judgment formed with regard to it. Considering the vast importance of the question, besides earnest inquiry, Divine assistance should be sought. Prayer like the following may be offered : "O all-wise, all-merciful God and Father, pour the bright beams of Thy light into my soul, and guide me into Thy eternal truth."

**1. The Itihasas and Puranas should be rejected as sacred books.**—It has been shown that they contain false geography, false astronomy, contradictory statements, the grossest exaggerations, and most dishonouring representations of God. Beautiful passages, it is true, may be culled from some of them, as from some other writings, but they are mixed with deadly error. As Bishop Caldwell remarks : “There is hardly a virtue which is not lauded in some Indian book, but on the other hand there is hardly a crime that is not encouraged by the example of some Indian divinity.”

It is true that the above works are considered to occupy a lower level than the Vedas and Upanishads, being only of the *smriti* class, not *sruti*, tradition and not revelation. Still, they are regarded as sacred.

The Upanishads and Vedas will be considered in separate Papers.

**2. Pantheism and Polytheism should be given up for Monotheism.**—The whole of the 33 crores of gods, goddesses and demons of the Hindu pantheon should be abandoned as existing only in imagination, and there should be a return to what was probably the most ancient form of belief among the Aryan race. Max Müller says :—

“There is a monotheism which precedes the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocation of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds.”

Amid the present polytheism of India there is generally still a belief in the existence of one great God. The poorest mother will say of her child that “God gave it;” the son of a peasant, if asked whether the idol he worships gave him life, will in most cases deny it, and ascribe it to a higher power.

Long before the names of Vishnu or Siva were ever heard, the old Aryans worshipped a great Being under the name of *Dyaus-Pitar*, Heaven-Father. It is He, who teaches us to call Himself our Father in heaven, whom we ought to worship. He is our Creator, our Preserver, the Author of all our blessings, our righteous Lord.

It follows from the above that the temples of Vishnu, Siva, and other Hindu gods and goddesses should be forsaken, and offerings no longer be made at them. The worship of the one true God should be substituted.

**3. Idolatry should not be countenanced in any way.**—It is an insult to the great Creator of the universe to represent Him by any image. To give the least encouragement to idolatry should be felt to be a great sin on the part of the educated man guilty of it, and a grievous wrong to his ignorant countrymen. It is much to be

regretted, however, that, this conduct is widely prevalent. *The Indian Nation* says : " We often hear of the mischievous effects of English education in India. If there have been any such effects, the grossest and most mischievous of them is the cowardly, hypocritical spirit."

It is hypocrisy for a man to make people suppose that he means one thing while he intends another totally different. Words should be used in their ordinary sense. Some say that they worship the one true God under the name of Vishnu or Siva. It is well-known what ideas the Hindus attach to these words, and to understand them in another sense is moral dishonesty.

Soldiers are distinguished by their uniforms. If in war a soldier put on the uniform of an enemy, he would be treated as such whatever might be his professions. In like manner, the one true God will not recognise as His follower the man who bears on his forehead the ashes of Siva or the emblem of Vishnu. The two are as opposite as light and darkness.

Many educated Hindus take part in idolatrous rites, pretending that they are harmless customs, kept up by female influence, and that they conform to them simply to avoid giving offence.

A leading Calcutta Native Journal commended an Indian on his return from England for " good-naturedly" obeying the requirements of Hinduism.

That idolatry is the very opposite of a " harmless custom" has already been shown. As well might a man be " good-naturedly" guilty of high treason against his sovereign.

The desire to please parents and relatives within proper limits is a praiseworthy feeling; but to break God's first and great command at the wish of any human being is a plea which cannot be sustained for a moment. Suppose a parallel case. Parents urge a son to take part in a robbery; they will be vexed if he does not consent. Would a judge accept such an excuse? Would it be true kindness to his parents to join them in such an act? Is he not rather bound, not only to abstain entirely from any participation in the crime, but to do his utmost to dissuade his parents from engaging in it? It would be great cruelty to behave otherwise.

Some educated men try to make a miserable compromise with conscience by giving idolatrous rites a different meaning from the real one, and the way in which they are understood by those who practise them.

*Young India* has a diagram entitled " Symbolical Durga Worship," taken from the " New Dispensation," and suggested by the late Keshab Chunder Sen. " The Supreme Mother Durga" is represented as vanquishing and slaying Sin; Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganes, and Kartic, representing Prosperity, Wisdom, Peace and

Strength, attend the Supreme Mother. An original article, entitled "Blessed Durga," begins as follows :—

"Mother Durga comes down from her abode in the Himalayas to greet her children in the plains who have been anxious to see her smiling face after one full year. She brings joy, wisdom, peace and prosperity in her train, and her children are preparing to give her a right warm reception. They will lay down the year's trials, tribulations and sorrows at the feet of the Divine Mother, who will bless and buckle them on to fight the battle of life with renewed vigour for another twelvemonth."

Such representations are paltering with truth. To ascribe the blessings we owe to God to "Mother Durga" is propagating a lie. The true God says, "I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Durga is the same as the blood-thirsty Kali.

The following remarks occur in the Calcutta Convocation Address of Sir H. S. Maine in 1866 :—

"If I had any complaint to make of the most highly educated class of Natives, . . . . I should assuredly not complain of their mode of acquiring knowledge, or of the quality of that knowledge. . . . I should rather venture to express disappointment at the use to which they sometimes put it. It seems to me that not seldom they employ it for what I can best describe as irrationally reactionary purposes. It is not to be concealed, and I see plainly that educated Natives do not conceal from themselves, that they have, by the fact of their education, broken for ever with much in their history, much in their customs, much in their creed. Yet I constantly read, and sometimes hear, elaborate attempts on their part to persuade themselves and others, that there is a sense in which these rejected portions of Native history, and usage and belief, are perfectly in harmony with the modern knowledge which the educated class has acquired, and with the modern civilization to which it aspires. . . . Whatever the cause, there can be no greater mistake, and, under the circumstances of the country, no more destructive mistake."

*The Indian Spectator*, after quoting the above, remarks that these words are as true now as when they were spoken more than twenty years ago.

Falsehood is never beneficial in the end; truth is always best. For educated men to employ sophistical arguments in support of what they know to be wrong, is duplicity most hurtful to themselves. Nor does the evil end there. As Sir H. S. Maine justly says: "*There can be under the circumstances of the country NO MORE DESTRUCTIVE MISTAKE.*" It helps to perpetuate the reign of error and superstition.

When a person is convinced that any belief or practice is wrong, he should plainly avow it. Thus reform may be brought about, while it is postponed indefinitely by an opposite course.

No doubt it requires some moral courage to refuse to take part in any idolatrous ceremony. In the early days of Christianity

hundreds of thousands laid down their lives rather burn incense before images. No such painful sacrifice is now necessary, so that the guilt of compliance is the greater.

**4. Daily Private Prayer.**—This should not consist in merely repeating God's name, but should express the desire of the heart. There should be confession of sin, petitions for pardon, holiness, guidance, strength for duty, with thanksgiving for mercies received. Without prayer, true religion is impossible.

**5. Where practicable, there should be Family Prayer.**—Women are the chief supporters of idolatry in India. Poor creatures, they



FAMILY PRAYER.

do not know better. Those who are mainly responsible for it and to be blamed are the educated men, who by their example encourage them in error. The women of India are naturally both intelligent and affectionate. If their husbands, instead of behaving as at present, would lovingly teach them to worship their great Father in heaven instead of idols, the reign of superstition would soon come to an end. The change is so reasonable as easily to be understood. It is so simple that it may be made intelligible even to a child.

Next to consistent conduct on their own part, educated men have no higher duty than to seek the enlightenment of the women of India. It has a most important bearing upon the future of the country.

The confession has sadly to be made that there are many godless families in countries nominally Christian. Still, there are not a few

who meet together for worship morning and evening. The service is simple. A hymn is sung; a passage is read from the Bible, and then all kneel together in prayer.

Hindu women are taught the greatest devotion to a husband. Manu says: "A husband must always be worshipped like a god by a good wife." "If a woman obeys his husband, by that she is exalted in heaven," (V. 154, 155). Although this is false, it shows what a great advantage men have in exercising influence over women if inclined to use it.

**6. Public worship should be observed.**—This is unknown to Hinduism. By a wise regulation, one day in seven is allowed as a day of rest. People should then meet together unitedly to offer prayer and thanksgiving to God.

To give a better idea of what is suggested, a short account will be given of the religious service at which the Queen Empress of India is present every Sunday. First a verse of the Bible, like the following, is read:

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

The people are then invited to confess their sins in the following words:—

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that are penitent; according to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake; that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy Name. Amen."

Passages are read from the Bible, teaching the people what they are to believe and do. The Ten Commandments, containing a summary of our duty to God and man, are repeated, the people after each saying, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law."

The following thanksgiving is used towards the close of the service:—

"Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we Thine unworthy servants do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all Thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;

for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth Thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to Thy service, and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*"

The singing of hymns is an important part of Christian worship. The following is a translation of one which has been used for nearly 3000 years :

Before Jehovah's awful throne,  
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy ;  
Know that the Lord is God alone ;  
He can create, and He destroy.

His sovereign power, without our aid,  
Made us of clay, and formed us men ;  
And, when like wandering sheep we strayed,  
He brought us to His fold again.

We are His people, we His care,—  
Our souls and all our mortal frame :  
What lasting honours shall we rear,  
Almighty Maker, to Thy name ?

We'll crowd Thy gates with thankful songs,  
High as the heavens our voices raise ;  
And earth, with her ten thousand tongues,  
Shall fill Thy courts with sounding praise.

Wide as the world is Thy command,  
Vast as eternity Thy love ;  
Firm as rock Thy truth must stand  
When rolling years shall cease to move.

Then follows a sermon, an address explaining some doctrine or enforcing some duty.

Let any intelligent, honest Hindu contrast Christian public worship with that of Hindu temples, and say which is preferable.

To be able to give suitable addresses, men require a special training. Hindu priests and pandits, as a rule, simply commit certain books to memory. A "Native Thinker" suggests that some scheme should be devised by which they would be "enable to learn as much at least, as a boy of ten years, attending a regular school is familiar with."

**7. Caste should be given up and the Brotherhood of Man acknowledged.**—As already shown, caste is founded on a blasphemous falsehood, and its effects upon the country are most injurious. The meanest should be spoken to kindly and without contempt. With regard to food a man may please himself, and the same in the

case of marriage ; but the system should be renounced. According to some Hindu books, in the supposed Satya Yuga, all men were of one caste. Let us earnestly seek to bring back, in this respect, the golden age.

**8. There should be earnest efforts to overcome sin and attain holiness.—**Every man who honestly tries to do this will feel more and more his own weakness.

At evening the confession must be sorrowfully made :—

“The day is done, its hours have run,  
And Thou hast taken count of all  
The scanty triumphs grace hath won—  
The broken vow, the frequent fall.”

Much may thus be learned of the necessity of Divine help, and of the nature of the religion suited to man's needs.

**9. Religious Truth should be sought diligently, with Prayer for Divine Guidance.—**The reader, if a Hindu, may be supposed to have some knowledge of his own creed. Christianity is professed by all the enlightened nations of the world. To it belonged men like Shakespeare, Milton, Newton, Johnson, Scott, and Faraday. It therefore well deserves most careful study.

It will be seen, on investigation, that Christianity possesses many of the truths included in Hinduism, without their accompanying errors. Some of them may be noticed :

**1. The Unity of God.—**This is taught to some extent in Hinduism, but it is obscured by pantheism on the one hand and polytheism on the other. Christianity declares unmistakeably that there is but one God.

**2. The Need of a Revelation.—**Hindus and Christians both confess that a written revelation from God has been given. The question is, whether it is represented by the Bible or by the Hindu sacred books ?

**3. The Sinfulness of Man.—**There is a remarkable confession of sin which some Brahmins ought to repeat daily :

Pápo'ham pápakarmáham pápátmá pápasambhavahah.

The meaning is: I am sin ; I commit sin , my soul is sinful ; I am conceived in sin. This is very similar to the account of man's state given in the Bible. David says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

But there is a great difference as to the way in which sin may be forgiven. Hinduism asserts that the bare naming of a God, washing in the Ganges, gifts to Brahmins, &c., are sufficient : Christianity teaches that it required a Divine sacrifice.

**4. The Doctrine of Incarnation.—**Hinduism teaches that at a crisis in the world's history deity becomes incarnate. So also Christianity has its incarnation—Jesus Christ. Hinduism has its

future incarnation—the Kalki Avatar ; so Christianity teaches that Christ will come again in great glory to judge the world.

Christianity teaches that man was created holy and happy. The Krita Yuga, the age of truth, is a tradition to the same effect. The fall of man is also virtually recognized in the Kali Yuga. "The deep sense of this fact," writes Coleridge, "and the doctrines grounded on obscure traditions of the promised remedy, are seen struggling, and now gleaming, now flashing, through the mist of pantheism, and producing the incongruities and gross contradictions of the Brahman mythology."

"No thoughtful student of the past records of man," says Trench, "can refuse to acknowledge that through all its history there has run the hope of a redemption from the evil which oppresses it; and as little can deny that this hope has continually attached itself to some single man. The help that is coming to the world, it has seen incorporated in a person. The generations of men, weak and helpless in themselves, have evermore been looking after ONE in whom they may find all they look for vainly in themselves and in those around them."

The Hindu ideas with regard to incarnations, though defective in many respects, recognise, says Hardwick, the idea of God descending to the level of the fallen creature and becoming man to lighten the burden of pain and misery under which the universe is groaning. They show a struggling to become conscious of the personality of God, and a panting for complete communion with Him.

5. *Regeneration*.—This denotes the *new birth*. After young Brahmans are invested with the cord, they are said to be *dwija*, twice-born. But this does not produce any change in their character. Jesus Christ teaches, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." This means that unless a man's heart is renewed or purified, he cannot enter heaven.

6. *A Judgment to come*.—Both Hinduism and Christianity agree with regard to a future judgment, although they differ in important respects as to the way in which it is to be conducted.

While Christianity and Hinduism agree in some particulars, it is a great mistake to suppose that they are both much the same. If you compare a man and a beast, it may be said that they both have one head, one mouth, two eyes, two ears, &c. ; but there are essential differences. So with Christianity and Hinduism. Compare Christ and Krishna.

Some of the enemies of Christianity try to persuade educated Hindus that it is dying out before advancing civilization. On the contrary, it has never made greater progress than at present. The Royal Society of Great Britain includes some of the most distinguished scientific men in the world. To be elected its President is an

honour reserved for those of the highest eminence. A former President, Professor Stokes, of Cambridge, is an earnest Christian.

Space does not permit the doctrines of Christianity to be described in detail. The reader is referred for further information to *Short Papers for Seekers after Truth\** and other works mentioned in the catalogue appended.

**Special Danger of Educated Hindus.**—There is, perhaps, no temptation to which intelligent men in India are more liable than to draw the conclusion : Popular Hinduism is mere priestcraft ; therefore all religions are of human invention. A little consideration will show that this inference is unwarranted. The logic resembles the following : Hindu geography is false ; therefore there is no true account of the earth. Man has religious instincts implanted in him by his Creator, and the just inference is that there is a true religion suited to his needs.

### THE FUTURE OF HINDUISM.

Hinduism, it must be confessed, has a very strong hold upon the people of India. The great majority have been reduced to such a state of mental weakness that the most contradictory statements, the most astounding miracles, are accepted with unhesitating faith. Indeed, Sir Monier Williams remarks that "the more evidently physical and metaphysical speculations are opposed to common sense, the more favour do they find with some Hindu thinkers." The people, as a rule, hug the fetters of caste ; their gods are beings after their own heart.

Hinduism, like every religion except Christianity, appeals to the pride so dear to the human heart. Man wishes to be his own saviour. The Hindu rejects the idea of trusting to anything for salvation but his own self-righteousness,—the merit he has been able to accumulate. It is true that he acknowledges some misdeeds, but they are counterbalanced by acts of charity. A Hindi verse says, A man steals an anvil and gives away a needle. He then stands waiting for the celestial chariot which he thinks must take him to heaven.

The foregoing remarks refer to the people generally. Among educated Hindus, with some noble exceptions, prospects are not much brighter. The following description, written nearly half a century ago, still applies to not a few :—

"They show no hatred of idolatry, no anxiety to rescue their fellow-countrymen from its yoke, no lofty moral bearing, no great aims or aspirations, no seriousness of spirit, or thoughtful earnest inquiry after religious truth. In the flush and ardour of youth, the great majority

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kill the conscience by outward compliance with the idolatry which they despise, or by making themselves over deliberately to worldliness. There is nothing of healthy life connected with their intellectual activity. The mongrel class, of which we now write, too timid to break off from what they despise and disbelieve, will live the subtle faithless life of the Greek of the Lower Empire, without courage or conscience, and hide but too often the heart of the atheist under the robe of the idolater. Hinduism has nothing to fear from the educated Natives. Her philosophers and men of science, in former times, were as thorough unbelievers in the vulgar superstition as the educated Natives of the present day, and ancient heathenism had its Socrates, and Plato, and Cicero, and Plutarch, and Lucian, who attacked disproved, and ridiculed their ancestral faith—conforming all the while. But Europe might be worshipping Jupiter and Juno, Odin and Freya, at this day, had not a new faith sprung up, and other and more effectual opponents. It will be the same here and elsewhere again, and again, and again."

A recent illustration of this is afforded by *The Hindu*, which may be regarded as the exponent of educated Indians in the Madras Presidency. Referring to the Paper on "Caste," an editorial says :—

"The subject is, however, familiar to our readers, most of whom admit its evils, but only differ from their foreign critics in their idea of the difficulty to find a workable remedy. It is all moonshine to talk of moral courage and setting an example of devotion and self-sacrifice to help the advancement of the reform : because we are sure that a man who acts under that notion and defies the extreme injunctions of caste will lose all influence over his countrymen, and will have no chance whatever of realizing the good that prompted such an extraordinary conduct on his part. Even for devotion and self-sacrifice to bear fruit there must be an antecedent condition of society where the example will operate on a sufficiently large number of men and thereby lead to an appreciable diminution in the force of orthodox opinion. Nor, in our judgment is there any necessity for violent efforts. The distinctions of caste in their most objectionable features are disappearing, and under the effect of enlightened public opinion men of different castes are learning to look upon one another as brethren. We may expect to see in a short period these distinctions reducing themselves to the prohibition of intermarriage and of eating together." Oct. 19, 1887.

The Rev. W. Stevenson thus describes the mode in which changes are to be brought about according to these reformers :—

"The evil customs and practices pervade the whole society of which they form a part, and they do not profess to be exempt from them. But they want to have them reformed,—only they must have every body reformed all at once, the whole society ought to make one simultaneous movement and at one grand moment throw off the yoke together. So they must wait till every one is ready, none must make any step before all the rest ; the whole community must as one body achieve the reform, the individual must just remain quiet until he finds himself free. You

observe that in this case too the would-be reformers do not find it necessary to set about reforming themselves; it is society they are anxious to operate on; for themselves first and chiefly they do not feel called upon to undertake the unpleasant task. If only society could be put right! if by a stroke of some magic wand all its evil customs and practices could be made to disappear, and a new constitution take their place, what a glorious change it would be for the enlightened! They are dissatisfied with the present state of things, and would like to see them improved. If only society could be put right! But there's the difficulty, a difficulty we can see no happy way of getting over. If the individuals are all to remain the same, it is beyond our weak power to see how the society is to be changed. For we don't know of any society which is not composed of individuals; and to make the whole move while every part remains where it was, does not appear an easy task. Given the problem:—how to make a railway train pass from Madras to Bangalore, while every wheel stands still—it will puzzle most to find a solution."

To such men "moral courage and self-sacrifice" are "all moonshine."

There can never be a reformation in any country if the leaders follow the masses, instead of setting them an example. Mill says in the book *On Liberty*: "The initiation of all wise or noble things comes and must come from individuals—generally at first from some one individual." The Rev. E. Rice says, "The self-styled patriot or reformer who will do all things for his country *provided he first saves his own skin*, is only pretender to the name."

Educated men should not "lay that flattering unctio[n] to their soul," suggested by *The Hindu*, that they should conform to the customs of their ignorant and superstitious countrymen, lest they should lose their influence over them. One of the maxims taught in Tamil schools is, "Do as your countrymen approve," or in other words, "Walk according to custom." Educated men should not be simply like dead fish floating with the stream.

Our conduct in life should be regulated by a sense of duty,—not from a desire to retain our influence over our countrymen. We should do what we believe to be right, whether others follow our example or not. We are not to do evil that good may come. Any other principle is as injurious as it is false. It is men who act up to their convictions—not time-servers—who have in the end most influence, and do most good to their countrymen.

It must be acknowledged that when the course of duty involves some self-denial, and a "by-path meadow" seems smooth and pleasant, it is very easy to find a plausible excuse for taking the latter. Self-deception is of all kinds the most-common.

With some educated Hindus "God and conscience," as well as "moral courage and self-sacrifice," are "all moonshine." Such men may be expected to take part in idolatrous rites as only

"harmless customs," and Hinduism will have nothing to fear from them.

Notwithstanding these discouragements, there is no doubt about the ultimate issue. Although the foregoing statements apply largely to educated men as a class, there are among them a few zealous consistent reformers, and in the end "Truth conquers."

At the banquet given by the National Liberal Club in London, in honour of Lord Ripon, Mr. Bright, the well-known friend of India, gave expression to the following views :—

" Well, if the English language is being spoken so widely over India, if the English literature is being read and studied ; if the science of this country and of western nations becomes the science of the people of India, what must be the result ? Before that force there must fall certain things. There must fall the system of caste, and there must fall the system of a debasing idolatry. These things cannot stand against the literature which is now being freely read and studied by multitudes of the most intelligent people of India."

Sir. A. C. Lyall, in his *Asiatic Studies*, has the following interesting forecast :—

" It is not easy to conceive any more interesting subject for historical speculation than the probable effect upon India, and consequently upon the civilisation of all Asia, of the English dominion ; for though it would be most presumptuous to attempt any prediction as to the nature or bent of India's religious future, yet we may look forward to a wide and rapid transformation in two or three generations, if England's rule only be as durable as it has every appearance of being. It seems possible that the old gods of Hinduism will die in these new elements of intellectual light and air as quickly as a net full of fish lifted up out of the water ; that the alteration in the religious needs of such an intellectual people as the Hindus, which will have been caused by a change in their circumstances, will make it impossible for them to find in their new world a place for their ancient deities. Their primitive forms will fade and disappear silently, as witchcraft vanished from Europe, and as all such delusions become gradually extinguished." pp. 299, 300.

An effort is now being made to prevent the "old gods of Hinduism" from dying in the "new elements of intellectual light and air." The leading Bengali novelist tried to do this even in the case of Krishna. All such attempts will be as fruitless as those made to arrest the decline of polytheism in Europe.

It is a pseudo-patriotism which rejects Christianity under the pretence that it is not Indian. The greatest Dravidian poet says, "The disease that is born with us kills us ; the medicine which is found on some far-off mountain cures our natal disease." It has already been shown that there is no such thing as a *national* religion. Like science, religion is universal.

Under other names, many of the same gods now worshipped

in India were once worshipped in Europe. A like change will follow. The temples of Vishnu and Siva will yet be as deserted as those of Jupiter and Minerva. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."

It is possible that the downfall of idolatry in India may require some centuries as it did in Europe. Much will depend, under God, upon Indian reformers being raised up with the courage and zeal of Luther. A rapid change would follow. Such will be the probable course of events.

The ancestors of the Hindus, the English, and other Aryan nations, says Max Müller, "had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven Father." The time will yet come when they will again recognise each other as brethren, kneel together at the same footstool, and offer the same grand old prayer, beginning, "Our Father which art in heaven."

Blessed are those who by example and precept are seeking to turn the people of India from dumb idols to the living God. This would lead to every other needed reform. Unhappy are the men, whatever may be their motives, who are actively or passively countenancing idolatry, and all the evils which follow in its train.

It has been shown that the Hindus are fettered by absurd caste rules, and that they are the victims of numberless superstitious fears. And what is the outlook of the world according to Hindu sacred books? It is thus described by Dr. Murray Mitchell:

"They are marked by a despondency ever ready to darken into despair. At present the Kali Yuga is advancing; and the world is plunging deeper and deeper into ignorance, vice, and misery. The patriot may die for his country—the martyr for his God; but their doings and sufferings are of no avail to stem the tide of evil. True, after eons of misery, the age of Truth comes back; but it does so only to pass away again, and torment us with the memory of lost purity and peace. The experience of the world is thus an eternal renovation of hope and of disappointment. Progress towards abiding good there is none. The whole conception which Hinduism forms of human life is overwhelmingly sad. Hope for ourselves, and effort for the good of others, are rendered impossible."\*

On the other hand, the Bible discloses "a divine purpose a purpose of mercy formed before the foundations of the world were laid, running through the ages, and steadily advancing towards a glorious consummation."\*

Let the reader carefully compare the two systems and follow the dictates of conscience.

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\* *Hinduism Past and Present*, p. 261.

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